

Translation of Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq of
'Ayn al-Quḍāh.

A Critical Annotated Translation of
Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī
(492-525/1098-1131)

By

Omar Jah

Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University.

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Abstract

It is believed that the traditional hostility between Ṣūfism and the Orthodox Schools in Islām came to an end, only after the conversion of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d.505/1111) to Ṣūfism. He was able to reconcile Ṣūfism with Islāmic Orthodoxy. However, Ṣūfism received another moral boost, later from the work of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq.

This thesis is basically concerned with presenting the work in a critically annotated translation. This translation is accompanied by an introduction, which attempts to put the work in a proper historical perspective within the political and intellectual milieu of the time. It also analyses his contribution to the intellectual development of Ṣūfism and indicates the major points of discussion in his work.

A CRITICAL ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF
ZUBDAT AL-HAQQA'IQ OF 'AYN
AL-QUDAH AL-HAMADANI.

by

O M A R J A H

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Institute of Islamic Studies,
McGill University

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TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

Consonants

Arabic Characters	English Transliteration	Arabic Characters	English Transliteration
ب	b	ص	s
ت	t	ذ	d
ث	th	ط	t
ج	j	ظ	z
ح	h	ع	'
خ	kh	م	gh
د	d	ن	f
ذ	dh	و	q
ر	r	ك	k
ز	z	ل	l
س	s	م	m
ش	sh	ن	n
ا	al- regardless of the following consonant.	ه	h
ء	initial: unexpressed.	و	w
آ	medial & final: '	ي	y
		أ	ah (final)
		إ	at (construct state)

Vowels

Short	Long	Diphthong
ا a	آ ā	او aw
و u	ū	اي ay
ي i	ī	ي (ī in final form)
		و (ū in final form)

PREFACE

My interest in undertaking the responsibility of translating Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī from Arabic into English originated from the special interest I have in Mysticism in general, and in the Islāmic mystical doctrine in particular. So, having found this work of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh very interesting, I decided to venture translating it into English and making it the basis of my Masters thesis. I found that the book represents what I may term an adventurous intellectual approach to Ṣūfism, and a step further, not only in the attempt that has been made by other Muslim scholars to bring Ṣūfism on an equal footing with the other branches of knowledge in Islāmic Thought, but also in emphasising the usefulness of Ṣūfism and its necessity as the only reliable source of knowledge through which one can ever hope to attain to the real knowledge of God, His Attributes, Prophecy and the Hereafter, which are the fundamental basis of the Creed of Islām. I was thus convinced that the study of Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq could be a very helpful means to the understanding of Islāmic mysticism in its intellectual form, and I hope therefore that the translation of such a work into English will be of great help to the students of Islāmic thought in general and to those who are engaged in mystical studies in particular; especially to those who may not possess the adequate facility to read works written in Arabic.

The book to be translated is believed to be an authentic work of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh. Most of the sources I have consulted mention it as an authentic work of his. Of these sources I shall mention: Kashf al-Zunūn of Ḥajjī Khalīfah, Istanbul, 1943, II, 951; Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-Hikmah of al-Bayhaqī, Lahore, 1351 A.H., p. 117; Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn of 'Umar Kaḥḥālāh, Damascus, 1960, VI, 132; Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur of Carl Brockelmann, Supplement I, p. 675; and the article of Fritz Meier, "Stambuler Handschriften dreier persischer Mystiker: Ain al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī, Najm ad-Dīn al-Kubrā, Najm ad-Dīn al-Dāja" in Der Islam, Volumes XXII-XXIV (1935-1937), p. 6f.

The text used in this translation was edited by 'Afīf 'Usayrān and published by the University of Tīhrān in 1961. In his editorial introduction 'Usayrān has listed about eight different manuscripts of the Zubdah which he has seen and which are available in different parts of the world. He states in his edition that he has used four of these manuscripts which he considers to be the most correct and authentic. It is important to notice that many of these manuscripts which he uses were already examined and approved by Fritz Meier in his aforementioned article, in which he observes that though Ḥajjī Khalīfah had had before him the Arabic and the Persian text of the Zubdah, he quotes only the beginning of the Arabic text. Meier mentions the manuscripts of Shahīd 'Alī in Istanbul (n. 1209), and of Berlin (n. 1727).

In my translation of the Qur'ānic verses in the text I have made use of Yūsuf 'Alī's The Holy Qur'ān, A. J. Arberry's The Koran Interpreted and Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall's The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an; but I have also depended on my own translation.

I feel obliged to record my deep gratitude to the Government of the Gambia and the Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Committee who provided me with all necessary financial needs to undertake this study at McGill University. I realize that without their material help this study would not have been possible.

I should like also to thank Dr. Charles Adams, the Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, for his constant encouragement and fatherly advice.

I would also like to put on record my profound gratitude to Dr. Hermann Landolt of the Institute of Islamic Studies, who, amid his innumerable activities, has found time to read with me the whole translation, the introduction and the notes on the translation in manuscript, and has made a considerable number of constructive corrections and useful suggestions which have been incorporated into the work. I highly appreciate his useful supervision and wise guidance, without which the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Musa Abdul who devoted much of his time to read the whole thesis and make useful suggestions which have also been incorporated. I recognize with appreciation that without his

invaluable help and useful advice this work would have been much more difficult. I should also not fail to thank his wife for her wonderful typing.

I cannot adequately thank my friend Talatu Mustapha who helped to read the translation in its early stage and made some corrections in the English structure.

I would also like to thank 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abū Zayd, 'Iffat al-Sharqāwī, Khālīd Mas'ūd and many other friends for their sincere help in checking some of the Arabic and Persian parts of the translations.

I

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSLATION

'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī, whose full name was Abū al-Ma'ālī 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Miyānājī¹, was born in the year 492/1098 in the city of Hamadān, one of the major cities of Irān. A well known Ṣūfī and a highly intellectual man, he belonged to a respectable family. His father was described by Ibn al-Sam'ānī, his contemporary, as "a virtuous Qāḍī and the son of a virtuous Qāḍī".² This suggests that his family had occupied the post of Qāḍī in the city of Hamadān for quite a long time. This intellectual background of his family must have been one of the motivating factors that helped him to gain a high standard of education while still very young. He must have started his education very early, for he himself tells us that he wrote most of his works before he reached the age of maturity.³ Unfortunately, none of our sources tells us anything about how or where 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was educated, or who his teacher was; however, we may assume that he received his education in one of the public schools which were maintained by the Saljūq vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk, under Malik Shāh (465-85/1072-92); who used to spend hundreds of thousands of dīnārs annually on the maintenance of public schools and the students who attended them.⁴ In such institutions where education and maintenance were

given free of charge,⁵ the gifted ones could easily make their way to the top of the intellectual ladder; this must have been the case of our hero. From the scattered pieces of information available in our sources we can gather that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was remarkably learned and greatly versed in the various sciences and the different fields of knowledge prevalent in his time. When we examine his criticism of the scholars who misinterpreted his writings,⁶ we are convinced that he had a thorough understanding and deep apprehension of the religious as well as the secular sciences of the time. In that criticism, he mentioned a number of the sciences in such a detailed manner, that one cannot help being convinced that he was really excellent in those sciences.⁷

Most of the sources are silent as to which theological and legal schools of thought he adopted; but al-Subkī lists him in his Ṭabaqāt as being among the Shāfi'ite jurists.⁸ As to his theological school we can assume that he was an Ash'arite; this can easily be substantiated by perusing his book al-Risālat al-'Alā'iyyah in which he discusses various theological problems along the lines of the Ash'arite school.⁹ However, it is quite certain that he was not in any way satisfied with the scholastic approach of these schools, nor was he satisfied with his own achievement in the field of law and theology, for no sooner had he reached the peak of the traditional science than he discovered that his scientific achievement had no meaningful answer to his problems. Thus he started looking here and there in an attempt to find a solution to his

problem. He finally found the solution through his reading the works of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, after which he said: "Nothing, besides the grace of God, saved me except my study of the writings of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī which I studied for nearly four years, during which time I experienced many wonders that have saved me from infidelity, misguidance and perplexity."¹⁰ As a result of this experience 'Ayn al-Quḍāh started to feel a great desire for and special interest in joining the Ṣūfī path to which he was guided by Aḥmad al-Ghazālī (d. 517/1123), who came to Hamadān a year after 'Ayn al-Quḍāh had gained the inspiration from the works of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī. He said, "My lord . . . the authority of the Ṣūfī path, the true interpreter of reality (al-ḥaqīqah) was brought to Hamadān by fate so that the veil of perplexity which covered me was by his service removed in less than twenty days; thus my situation became clear."¹¹ By this statement we can assume that Aḥmad al-Ghazālī was the first Ṣūfī shaykh to introduce 'Ayn al-Quḍāh into Ṣūfism, and for this reason, he became his spiritual leader whom he often mentioned in his works. The scholarly distinction and the mystical importance of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī is notably explained by Ibn Khallikān who says in Wafayāt al-A'yān that Aḥmad al-Ghazālī was an eloquent preacher, a miracle worker, and an able jurist. He had replaced his brother Abū Ḥamid in the professorship at Niẓāmiyyah College in Baghdād. Among his works, Ibn Khallikān lists Lubāb al-Iḥyā' (a summary of Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn of his brother al-Ghazālī), al-Sawāniḥ fī al-'Ishq and al-Dhakhīrah fī 'Ilm al-Baṣīrah.

He travelled widely and rendered invaluable services to Ṣūfīs.

After the death of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh seems to have taken further mystical training under the guidance of various shaykhs among whom were Shaykh Barakat al-Hamadānī (d. 520/1125),¹³ Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ḥammuyah (d. 530/1135), the grandfather of Sa'd al-Dīn Ḥammuyah (d. 649 or 50/1251 or 52).¹⁴

Some sources, such as Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-Ḥikmah of al-Bayhaqī, state that 'Umar al-Khayyām al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 517) was one of his masters.¹⁵ However, this opinion was rejected by Raḥīm Farmanish (a living Persian scholar) who maintains that since 'Umar al-Khayyām is never mentioned in any of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's works, and since it is assumed that al-Khayyām spent most of his time in Balkh or Nīshāpūr while 'Ayn al-Quḍāh stayed in Hamadān, it is most unlikely that the two ever met on earth.¹⁶

Having undergone such an intensive mystical training under the aforementioned shaykhs, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was recognised as a Ṣūfī master and highly venerated by the Ṣūfī community of his time. In his Tabaqāt, al-Subkī quotes Ibn al-Sam'ānī as describing 'Ayn al-Quḍāh as an intelligent, virtuous, learned Ṣūfī whom both the elite and the ordinary people trusted and

venerated, and from whom they sought blessings.¹⁷ His mystic esteem brought him many followers among whom were political figures such as 'Azīz al-Dīn al-Mustawfī, a Saljūq vizier (d. 525/1130), Sa'd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, Imām 'Izz al-Dīn, Diyā' al-Dīn (the brother of 'Azīz al-Dīn) and Kāmil al-Dawlah wa al-Dīn.¹⁸ This resounding popularity, Ibn Sam'ānī believes gained him many enemies from both the intellectual and the ordinary circles. It was this animosity that eventually, as we shall see, led to his death.

'Ayn al-Quḍāh's only powerful and faithful disciple who was able and willing to give him protection was the vizier 'Azīz al-Dīn who later fell a victim to the power struggle among the Saljūq rulers. We are informed by al-Subkī that no sooner was the vizier executed by Sultān Maḥmūd, under the instigation of a more powerful vizier Qiwām al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim al-Darkazīnī, than 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was arrested by the order of al-Darkazīnī and tried by some hostile 'ulamā' appointed by al-Darkazīnī himself. They accused him of heresy, such as claiming prophecy and advocating pantheism, basing their accusation on some extracts quoted from his works.¹⁹ A contemporary scholar, 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, also put the blame of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's death on the vizier al-Darkazīnī and held him responsible for it when he said: "Among his victims (referring to al-Darkazīnī) was 'Ayn al-Quḍāh al-Hamadānī, one of the most eminent imāms and highly venerated saints, who possessed the power to perform miracles . . . he was hanged by al-Darkazīnī without any respect for God or the Faith."²⁰

After his trial in Baghdād 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was sent back to Hamadān where he was hanged on Jumādā II 525/6 December 1131 in the very school where he had taught.²¹

It seems probable that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was a victim of the malicious political squabbles which ravaged the Saljūq Empire after the death of Malik Shāh and his powerful vizier Nizām al-Mulk in 1092, rather than of his alleged heresy.

We are informed by al-Bayhaqī that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh combines in Zubdah discussions on Ṣūfī issues with those of philosophy; this means that he employs philosophy to explain mysticism. He maintains that mysticism starts where philosophy ends. He says, "Unless one realizes the limit of the intellect, which is the only source of the philosophical sciences, one cannot have any access to gnosis (the only source of mystical knowledge) because the last stage of the intellect is the beginning of the stage of gnosis."²³ In his attempt to propagate Ṣūfism 'Ayn al-Quḍāh adopted a rather intellectual approach to explain his mystical views. He devoted most of his time to guiding his disciples through correspondence;²⁴ in his letters he used to supply them with the basic principles of the Ṣūfī doctrine and all disciplinary instructions needed to guide a novice into the right path. From this method, we can assume that his mystical teaching was more of an intellectual and less of the Ṣūfī traditional type; in other words, we can easily see that with him the emphasis shifted from the convent life to the intellectual

practice, through which the novice is intellectually trained to such an extent that he can easily realize the limit of the intellect and its inefficiency to comprehend the real knowledge of God, whereupon he develops a fervent desire to cross the boundary of the intellect and proceed to the stage beyond where the true knowledge of the Real Supernal Being can be acquired. It seems to me that this intellectual approach to Ṣūfism might have generated some kind of silent resentment in traditional Ṣūfī circles against 'Ayn al-Qudāh; for it is observed that the reaction of the Ṣūfī community to his trial and execution was apathetic despite his repeated appeals to them for help; he said: "Neither religious doctors ('ulamā') nor the Ṣūfī shaykhs have undertaken their responsibility to save my life, rather they handed me over to the adversary for execution."²⁵

A brief look into his works, especially the Zubdah and the Shakwā reveals the ever-increasing tension that existed between 'Ayn al-Qudāh and the 'ulamā'. It is my opinion that this tension was generated not only by 'Ayn al-Qudāh's extraordinary intelligence or ability to produce something that his contemporaries could not understand, but also by his independent approach to scholarship in general and to the religious sciences in particular; for his independent character had made him oppose with rigour anything he believed to be wrong, no matter what the consequence might be.

Before introducing 'Ayn al-Qudāh's works in general and the Zubdah in particular, I must try to present an

overall picture of the development of the religio-political life in the Saljūq period; that is, roughly between 450/1058 and 550/1155. It was during this period that the Saljūqs launched their vigorous campaign for mass education by building colleges in the major cities of the empire; these schools became known as Niẓāmī schools, named after Niẓām al-Mulk, the Saljūq vizier who served under Sulṭān Malik Shāh. In these schools the teaching of Sunnī orthodoxy made a remarkable advance under able professors such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, who emerged in this campaign and began to question the validity of the various methods used by the different sects in their quest for knowledge. He ended by rejecting most of them, and with some modifications he re-introduced the Sunnī school of thought after he had successfully incorporated into it the doctrine of Ṣūfism which had long suffered persecution. Convinced of the value of Ṣūfism for reforming and purifying Islām from misconceptions and misinterpretations al-Ghazālī, and later ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh, espoused the doctrine of Ṣūfism and made it an important aspect of the religious practice within the general framework of Islām. Not only did al-Ghazālī reconcile Sunnism with Ṣūfism and assure the latter its right place in Islām, but he also explained in the most impressive and convincing language that Ṣūfism had never been an alien element in Islām; rather it had always been an integral part of it.²⁶ Al-Ghazālī's campaign to bridge the gap between Ṣūfism and Sunnism coincided well with the government's drive to train theologians, jurists and administrators in the Sunnī doctrine, in

order to eliminate heresy throughout the empire.²⁷ His success in reconciling Sunnism with Ṣūfism is often likened to al-Ash'arī's resounding success in making the Mu'tazilite method in theology acceptable to Sunnī orthodoxy; as Gibb says: "both of them had forged syntheses which allowed the essential principle of the other movement to find accomodation in orthodoxy."²⁸

At the time 'Ayn al-Qudāh was born, the burning issue pre-occupying the minds of both the secular and the religious leaders was that of the unity and integrity of Islām and the Muslim community, which was endangered by what they termed "the Shī'ite and Ismā'īlī heresy," which worked in close collaboration with the philosophers. While the Shī'ites emphasised the necessity of the Imām as the basic principle of belief, the Ismā'ilites emphasised the idea of ta'līm (the inward instruction received directly from the hidden Imām). This kind of belief could not only be disruptive to the unity of Muslims but could also be a direct threat to the validity of the Qur'ān and the position of the Prophet as the basic source for religious knowledge.²⁹ As for the philosophers, they maintained that though prophecy and philosophy derive their knowledge from the same source; that is, the active intellect, prophecy is in an inferior position because philosophy acquires its knowledge from pure reasoning, whereas prophecy acquires its knowledge from the sphere of speculation.³⁰ In their counterattack the Sunnī theologians attempted not to make philosophy unacceptable to religion but to adjust religious doctrine in order to meet philosophy on common ground.³¹ It was towards a solution

of these problems that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh wrote most of his works, especially the Zubdah.

Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq

The book is one of many works written by 'Ayn al-Quḍāh. It is mentioned in several sources such as Kashf al-Zunūn of Ḥajjī Khalīfah, Tatimmat Ṣiwān al-Hikmah of al-Bayhaqī, and Rayḥānat al-Adab of Muḥammad 'Alī Tabrīzī, which confused it with Tamhīdāt and stated that it was written in both Arabic and Persian, and that its original name was Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq but that it was later known as Tamhīdāt. However, this confusion was clarified by F. Meier who discovered that the author of Rayḥānat might have taken his information from Kashf al-Zunūn which reports a Persian translation of Zubdah; the Tamhīdāt is of course written in Persian.³²

The book was written while 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was twenty-four years old.³³ It consists of one hundred chapters, which are mainly centered around three major problems; namely, the problem of the Divine Essence and Divine Attributes, the problem of prophecy and the problem of the hereafter. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains that faith cannot be perfect unless one has acquired a real belief in these three principles, and that real belief in them can only be obtained by means of intuition (al-baṣīrah) and not by reason (al-'aql). He says, "All that the intellect can perceive of the reality of prophecy is to conclude in most general terms that there exists something for the prophet without comprehending the reality of that thing itself; and such a belief is remote from the belief of the one endowed with al-baṣīrah."³⁴ Here we can easily see the

motivation behind this work; that is, to defend the faith of Islām against the heresy of rationalism ('ilm al-naẓar). However, we should realize that although 'Ayn al-Qudāh's aim is to show that the intellect is by no means sufficient to apprehend God and His attributes, he does not in any way reject it completely. In fact, the intellect for him has an important role to play, but by using the intellectual tools of rationalism, he tries nevertheless to show that the intellect is insufficient and defective, in so far as understanding what he believes to be the central principle of Islām is concerned. For this reason 'Ayn al-Qudāh raises quite a number of philosophical problems in this book and discusses them at great length. A full discussion of the three aforementioned problems is outside the purpose of this part of our introduction, but will come later. The main purpose here is to discuss his motive for writing this book, and the method he applied to achieve it. It is our intention to come later to a comparison of his approach with that of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, who happened also to have raised similar problems earlier.

There were many reasons for 'Ayn al-Qudāh to write this book; some of these he has explained in his preface. But when we carefully examine the book, we are almost certain that he was also motivated by his firm belief in the sincerity and the authenticity of the mission of the Prophet. He therefore felt the ever increasing necessity to defend these against their critics.³⁵ It is beyond doubt that there was a well-planned and in-

tellectually co-ordinated criticism against the established religion at the time of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh; such criticism was directed by the Shī'ites, the Ismā'īlites and the philosophers. The failure of their opponents to meet them with an effective intellectual challenge must have been among the factors that prompted 'Ayn al-Quḍāh to take his theosophical stand in explaining what he believed to be the real faith of Islām. Al-Ghazālī's impact on Islamic thought, however, made it possible for 'Ayn al-Quḍāh to challenge his opponents on their own ground by way of philosophy and logic, while at the same time he could adhere to the basic principle of Sunnī orthodoxy. With these motives in mind, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh launched his courageous attack on those who claimed to understand, and therefore, to believe in the reality of the three aforementioned principles - of the divine essence and divine attributes, of prophecy and of the hereafter. He maintained that if they had acquired real knowledge of these principles, they would not have cast the least doubt on any of them. If sight tries to apprehend objects of smell its apprehension, if any, will be very different from the reality of these objects.³⁶ By such a simple analogy 'Ayn al-Quḍāh tries to establish his theosophical school, attempting to convince his readers that Ṣūfism is not only an integral part of the religion of Islām but also a basic principle without which the means to acquire firm belief in Islām would be impossible. The real knowledge of God, Prophecy and the hereafter is accessible only to the Ṣūfīs, who derive their knowledge from al-baṣīrah, which is completely closed to the intellect.

Besides the Zubdah there are many other works attributed to 'Ayn al-Quḍāh. We shall mention some of these works which stand as the best manifestations of his scholarly distinction, his great achievement in the field of Islāmic sciences in general and in that of mystical experience in particular. Among these works are al-Risālah al-'Alā'iyah written on theology, and Ghāyat al-Baḥth fī Ma'ānī al-Ba'th written on the problem of eschatology; these two works are mentioned in the Zubdah. The ten Tamhīdāt (sections) written in Persian deal mainly with Ṣūfī doctrine, its principles and the secret of gnosis. Al-Maktūbāt are letters which he wrote to his disciples, giving them all necessary instructions pertaining to Ṣūfism. These letters are mentioned in the Tamhīdāt. Shakwā Gharīb al-Awṭān ilā 'Ulamā' al-Buldān was written while 'Ayn al-Quḍāh was imprisoned in Baghdād. It is an appeal to other scholars to intervene on his behalf with the vizier al-Darkazīnī in order to save his life. Shakwā and the Tamhīdāt have, together with the Zubdah, been edited by 'Affī 'Usayrān and published by the University of Ṭihrān in 1341 Solar A.H., under the title: Muṣannafāt 'Ayn al-Quḍah. Another work of his is Ghāyat al-Imkān fī Dirāyat al-Makān, recently edited and published by Raḥīm Farmanish. However, F. Meier doubts its originality. This work is written on the mystical explanation of the concept of time and space vis-à-vis God. Other works include Rasā'il-i-Yazdān Shinakht, written on theology and divided into three chapters; Risālah-i-Lawā'ih, written on the pattern of al-Sawānīh of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī; al-Madkhal ilā al-'Arabiyyah wa Riyāḍat 'Ulamā' al-Adabiyyah, written on Arabic language and literature.³⁷

The study of Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh has shown that the main points he discusses in this book center around three major problems: the problem of the divine essence and its attributes; the problem of prophecy, and the problem of the hereafter. The discussion of these three problems is as follows.

I. Divine Essence and its Attributes:

'Ayn al-Quḍāh attempts to explain this problem in a logical way when he says that the attribute of the existence of God (al-wujūd) and the affirmation of His eternity (qidam) is to be sought from consideration of the concept of existence, which is the most general. For existence itself is wholly divided into contingent (ḥādith) and eternal a parte ante (qadīm); and since it is against the law of nature that the contingent should make itself exist, it follows therefore that the contingent must have been created by the eternal a parte ante. If there were no eternal a parte ante, the contingent would never come into existence. For this reason, the One who exists by himself must be a necessary being. Since there is existence, it follows necessarily that there is eternal a parte ante. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains that that is the best way to prove the existence of eternal a parte ante; that is, through existence itself.³⁸

From this analysis, which implies that God is the only necessary being and that all which is other than He must have emanated from Him, our author concludes that God's attributes are but the relationship between Him and all existent things, and that they are necessary to Him. They

cannot be accidental or outside His essence; for an accident needs a cause and the necessary being by virtue of His essence is above all needs; otherwise He would not be necessary.

In the opinion of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, all attributes of His actions are necessary to Him like all the attributes of His essence, for they are the only relation between Him and existent things; without them nothing could have been brought into existence. He explains this further when he says: "If one relates the divine essence to the emanation of existent things, realizing that all existent things are contingent and that they need a creator, then the relationship between them and their creator would be called 'power' (al-qudrah). It could be called 'will' (al-irādah) with regard to another relation. Because of this, the weak-minded people believe that there is a difference between al-qudrah and al-irādah."³⁹ He goes on to say: "Every contingent is an object of the divine power; otherwise it would not have existed. Therefore the source of existence is the Powerful One (al-Qādir). Every object of power is also an object of will; otherwise it would not have existed. Therefore the source of existence is the Wilful One (al-Murīd). Every object of will is also an object of knowledge; otherwise it would not have been brought into existence; therefore the source of existence is the Knowing One (al-ʿAlīm)."⁴⁰ 'Ayn al-Quḍāh treats the rest of the attributes in the same way. He tries to explain the divine attributes in a very mystical way when he says that the Sunnī statement that "divine attributes are neither the essence itself nor are they other

than it,"⁴¹ should be understood as: "the attributes are the essence itself if one views them from the angle which is proximate (yalī) to the essence, and in this respect one would not see any difference between them and the essence; but if one views them from an angle which is proximate to existence, which is divided into numerous parts, one would see that the attributes are different from the essence." He continues, "the best example of this is to be found in the number 'ten' (al-‘asharah). Though the concept of 'ten' is indivisible, it has different meanings; it can be made up by two 'fives', half of 'twenty', a third of 'thirty', or a quarter of 'forty'; yet it remains the same without any change."⁴² He maintains that this is the position of the righteous predecessors (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ) and that whoever establishes the essence without the attributes is an ignorant innovator;⁴³ anyone who establishes the attributes as totally different from the essence is a dualist and an ignorant infidel."⁴⁴ Here his mystical views become quite clear; that this is to say, besides God nothing would exist, for as we shall see, as do other mystics, any existence besides that of God would mean duality. (Perhaps for this reason, al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) was quoted as saying: "Never did I look at anything without seeing God in it."⁴⁵)

However, our hero does not ignore the fact that there are some difficulties for non-Ṣūfīs in understanding his mystical intellectualization when he says: "The intellect is incapable of apprehending the existence of the divine attributes which are neither identical nor different from His essence. You must be sure that unless the light of intuition appears in your heart it will be inconceivable that

you could obtain a real belief in the existence of the attributes of knowledge, or for that matter, any sempiternal attribute of God. This light appears only in the stage beyond the intellect."⁴⁶ For what is conceived in this stage needs no premise, just as in the case of the objects of the sense of sight, the sight does not need any premises to perceive these objects. 'Ayn al-Qudāh appears to agree with the Sunnī theologians on the issue of God's attributes in so far as the existence of these attributes is concerned. However, he completely disagrees with them as to the definition of these attributes and their relation to His essence, for, while the latter conceive the attributes as something different from His essence the former holds that when one thinks only of Him, these attributes would cease to exist, because the attributes exist only when one thinks of His creatures. But when one thinks of Him, one would see only One and nothing else. Al-Ḥallāj was asked what was the way to God and he replied that the way should be between two beings, and that with God nothing exists.⁴⁷

This mystical interpretation of the divine attributes represents an aspect of 'Ayn al-Qudāh's thesis on existence in general. In his opinion all existent things have emanated from God; that is to say, God is the only source of all existent things. In their emanation from God all existent things are at the same level, without any difference in time. He says: "Nothing in existence is simultaneous with God, neither the first being nor any other being . . . nonetheless the Necessary Being is always present with the existence of every thing in the very moment it comes into existence, and His togetherness

with what is yet to exist when it has come into existence is the same as His togetherness with the first creature without any difference in time."⁴⁸ Because wherever God exists, no time or space will exist. This is, of course, in complete contrast to the philosophers' views on the concept of emanation, for they believe that all existent things must have emanated from the Necessary Being in a hierarchial order; that is, one from the other, because one and the same thing cannot have more than one thing emanating from it.⁴⁹ According to 'Ayn al-Quḍāh things cannot emanate one from the other, simply because emanation means bringing a thing out of the state of non-existence to the state of existence, and since none of the existent things has real existence it follows that none of them can be the source of emanation for something else.⁵⁰ Emanation, in 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's view, is nothing but creation⁵¹ and creation means nothing more than the relation between God and His creatures.⁵² This is His togetherness with everything (ma'iyyatuhu), for, the existence of everything depends on this relation, and this relation is not separated from Himself. Thus 'Ayn al-Quḍāh concludes that nothing has real existence but God. The existence of all beings in relation to God is like the existence of the internal picture in the mirror in respect to the external picture reflecting on the mirror. For, in reality, the internal picture in the mirror does not exist at all.⁵³

In his esoteric work, Mishkāt al-Anwār, al-Ghazālī says that existence is divided into two: that which exists by itself and that which exists through another

agent. He maintains that when one considers the existence of the latter by itself, one finds that it is sheer nothingness, for it exists only through its relation with its agent, and this kind of existence is not real existence; rather the real existence is that of God.⁵⁴

'Ayn al-Quḍāh's view on God's attributes of existence here is essentially the same as that of al-Ghazālī in al-Mishkāṭ; however, his method of presenting this view through creation, time, eternity and His togetherness with all existent things seems to be original. From this concept of God and His attributes the mystics are able to ascend from the depth of metaphor to the peak of reality, maintains al-Ghazālī, and there they see with their eyes that there is nothing in existence but God; that is, everything is perishable except God. He maintains that when the mystics arrive at the realm of the reality they agree that they have seen nothing but God. Some of them became so intoxicated by seeing Him that they forgot themselves, whereupon some expressed their feeling by saying "I am the Truth" (al-Ḥallāj) or "There is nothing in my garment but God", (Abū Sa'īd Bābu al-Khayr).⁵⁵ This is the experience which 'Ayn al-Quḍāh tries to explain when he says: "The Glory of the Sempiternal Majesty has risen, whereupon the knowledge and the intellect disappeared; thus the writer remains away from himself."⁵⁶ It is under this kind of mystical experience that the Ṣūfīs may say that nothing exists but God, since everything emanates from Him. But one may ask, "Why should existent things emanate from God?" 'Ayn al-Quḍāh would say that this emanation is necessary since it is the only means by which God manifests Himself to

his creatures;⁵⁷ this manifestation is one thing and is quite necessary to God since it is a fulfilment of His eternal will. He quotes the prophet Dāwūd as asking God why he created the creatures and God's answer was: "I wanted to be known." This eternal will, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains, must be fulfilled, and its fulfilment is the creation of creatures. For this reason the emanation of creatures from Him becomes necessary.⁵⁷ However, this emanation is nothing different from Himself; rather, it is a relation between Him and all existent things, and since He is one in all aspects this relation must be one in all aspects. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh says, "The Essence of God is One if we view it on its own, but if we view it through the emanation of existent things from Him, one would find many names and different attributes for it."⁵⁸ In 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's opinion this difference exists only when one thinks of contingents alone.

The Opinions of the Different Theological Schools:

As a theologian, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 330/941), generally accepted as the founder of the Sunnī orthodoxy, maintains that what is meant by saying that God knows is that He has knowledge; what is meant by saying that God is powerful, is that He has power; what is meant by saying that God is living, is that He has life. Such is the case with all His beautiful names and attributes; they belong to this essence but they are neither God Himself nor other than Himself.⁵⁹ When one examines al-Shahrastānī (d. 549/1154), another Sunnī, in his Nihāyah, one finds a confirmation of this position. He says, "The orthodox

Ash'artites say that God knows by knowledge, is powerful by power, is living by life; He hears by hearing, sees by sight, wills by willing, speaks by speech and exists by self-subsistence. All these attributes are additional to His essence. They are modes that subsist in His essence eternally."⁶⁰ In his mystical interpretation 'Ayn al-Qudāh maintains that the divine attributes are not additional to His essence because that would lead to some sort of duality in God's essence, which is impossible.⁶¹

Abū Hudhayl al-'Allāf (d. 226/841 or 235/850), one of the leading Mu'tazilites, maintains that God knows by knowledge which is identical with His essence, that He is powerful by power, which is Himself. So it is, he said, with all the attributes.⁶² Abbād, another Mu'tazilite of the third century, said: "God is powerful but not by any power, knowledgeable but not by any knowledge, living but not by any life and hearing but not by any ear; and the same thing would apply to all beautiful names applied to Him."⁶³

The position of the Shī'ites on this problem is best explained by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī Bābawayh al-Qummī, known as Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), in his Risālat al-I'tiqād, where he said: "Our belief concerning the attributes of His essence is this: whenever we describe God by the attributes of His essence we only desire by each attribute the denial of its opposite in respect of Him the Glorious, the Mighty. We say that Allāh, the Glorious, the Mighty, has always been the All-Hearing

(Sāmi'), the All-Seeing (Baṣīr), the All-Powerful (Qadīr), the All-Knowing (ʿAlīm), the All-Wise (Hakīm), the All-Glorious (ʿAzīz), the Ever-Living (Ḥayy), the Everlasting (Qayyūm), the One (Wāhid), the Eternal (Qadīm), for these are attributes of His. We do not say that He has always been the Great Creator (Khāliq), the Agent (Fā'il), the All-Willing (Shā'ī) and All-Desiring (Murīd), the Approver (Rādī), the Disapprover (Sākhiṭ), Provider (Rāziq), the All-Bountiful (Wahhāb), the Speaker (Mutakallim); because these are the attributes of His actions (af'āl) and are, therefore, created. For it is not permissible to say that Allāh is always to be qualified by them."⁶⁴ Here, one notices, that though the Shī'ites do believe in the attributes of His essence, they do not permit the attributes of His actions to be attributed to His essence. In other words, these attributes are created and nothing created should be classified with the divine attributes. This position of the Shī'ites is very close to that of the Mu'tazilites.

The Position of the Philosophers:

The position of the philosophers on this problem is clearly explained by al-Shahrastānī who says, "The philosophers have said that the Necessary Being by Himself could not be conceived, except as being one in all aspects. No attribute, no species, no space and no form can be applied to the Necessary Being . . . He has negative attributes, such as being devoid of multiplicity in all respects."⁶⁵ Here one sees a complete rejection of the existence of any sort of attributes besides the divine essence, Soheil

Afnān, a contemporary scholar, has tried in his book - Avicenna, his life and work - to explain the philosophers' position when he says, "Avicenna would not deny any of the Divine Attributes but in his characteristic manner gave them a purely rational interpretation. For he would say that when it is said that God is powerful the reason is that the existence of all beings proceeds from Him; and when it is said that God is living what is meant is His being as a pure intellect and that He perceives and acts continuously; and when it is said that God is bountiful it is meant that He seeks nothing for Himself. Moreover, God is eternal a parte ante as well as He is eternal a parte post. As a pure substance He is simple and unlike all possible beings. His essence and His existence are one and the same."⁶⁶ In an attempt to substantiate his mystical view on this problem over and against the position of the speculative scholars, 'Ayn al-Qudāh concludes that although speculative scholars may acquire some knowledge of the divine attributes, their acquisition of such knowledge is far below that of the gnostics, for some of these scholars would try to deny these attributes while the others would see the attributes as being completely different from the essence; thus their knowledge of God would not generate any desire or quest to go further in this search for the real knowledge of God. Whereas gnosis generates a strong desire in mystics to strive further, in order to enjoy a genuine meeting with God and to achieve communion with His presence.⁶⁷

II

Prophecy (Nubuwwah)

The point of dispute here does not really center around the mission of the Prophet as such, for all Muslim theologians appeared to have accepted prophecy as an authentic divine communication between God and His creatures on earth. Rather the area of disagreement among them with regard to prophecy is mainly on the interpretation of prophecy and its function.

For 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, belief in prophecy is one of the three principles which form the basis of faith; as a principle of faith he considers it something beyond the reach of the intellect. According to him human perception is categorized in three stages: the stage of sensory-perception (al-hiss), in which the object of knowledge is perceived through the five senses; the stage of the intellect ('aql), in which the object of knowledge is apprehended through the intellect by deductive method (istidlāl); the stage beyond the intellect (al-ṭawr warā' al-'aql), in which the object of knowledge is perceived through intuition (al-kashf).⁶⁸ It is this last stage which is identified with walāyah (sainthood), that separates the stage of the intellect from that of prophecy.⁶⁹ He goes on to explain and says, "Prophecy is degrees of perfections which are given to the Prophets in a sphere beyond the intellect . . . by walāyah, we mean that a saint is intuitively endowed with some ma'ānī (spiritual realities) which are not accessible to the intellect, such as the Caliph Abū Bakr's knowledge in advance that his wife would give birth to a baby girl before he died;

and the story of the Caliph 'Umar who could see and talk to his army commander Sāriyah in the battlefield while he was still in Madīnah. This is some of the knowledge of the unseen ('ilm al-ghayb).⁷⁰ 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is very clear in placing walāyah below nubuwwah when he says: "The sphere of nubuwwah is beyond that of walāyah, and the end of sainthood is the beginning of prophecy, just as the end of the intellect is the beginning of sainthood."⁷¹ However, due to other circumstances that we do not really know, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh takes an ambiguous position in his Tamhīdāt as to the position of walāyah: being above or below nubuwwah, when he says, "The prophets are endowed with three prerogatives (khāsiyyah): the power of performing miracles, the ability to see the affairs of the hereafter, and the ability to perceive the unseen in the state of awakesness. The saints are endowed with the same prerogatives in different terms at the beginning of their journey. They should not relax and stop at this point; otherwise they may be stripped of their position of nearness to God. Thus their miracle-working power (al-karāmāt), their intuitive knowledge (al-futūḥāt), and their spiritual discoveries (al-waqi'āt) would turn into a veil that will prevent them from arriving to God. So the saints should not stop at these three prerogatives, rather they should strive more in order to be closer to Him because the distance between nearness to God and prophecy is like the distance between the Throne and the earth."⁷² From such a statement one may get the impression that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is trying to place walāyah above nubuwwah, as it is understood by 'Usayrān in his commentary on 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's Shakwā.⁷³ In my own opinion, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is placing

walāyah neither above nor below nubuwwah, for the point seems to be that 'ilm al-ghayb, which is common both to the prophets and the saints, may become a veil for the saints but not for the prophets; according to him the saints should always continue their attempt at getting closer to God rather than being proud of their karamāt (the veil being this pride). The distance between the position of a saint and that of a prophet with regard to nearness to God is like that between the Throne and the earth. The prophets are not subject to any kind of temptation since they are ma'sūm (protected from this kind of temptation).⁷⁴ Despite the ambiguity of 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's explanation of walāyah and nubuwwah here, one can still venture to say that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh in the Zubdah is not entirely different from 'Ayn al-Quḍāh in the Tamhīdāt, in so far as the position of walāyah and nubuwwah is concerned, contrary to 'Usayrān's understanding of it. In clarifying such ambiguity, Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī (d. 717/1317) has been quoted by Hermann Landolt as saying, "What al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmīdhī (d. 285 or 320/899 or 932) means in his statement that the end of the Anbiyā' is only the beginning of the Awliyā', is that as far as the Sharī'ah (divine law) is concerned, the end of the Anbiyā' is the beginning of the Awliyā' but as far as the Tarīqah (the Ṣūfī path) is concerned, the end of the Awliyā' should be the beginning of the Anbiyā' . . . that is to say that while the exoteric aspect of Sharī'ah is revealed through nubuwwah, it is through walāyah, that its esoteric aspect is known."⁷⁵ For this reason Henry Corbin understands that walāyah is a continuation of nubuwwah when he says that the difference between walāyah and nubuwwah is a difference in term not in concept. That is to say that

walāyah is the esoteric aspect of nubuwwah (bāṭin al-nubuwwah). He maintains that this is the most current definition of walāyah.⁷⁶

‘Ayn al-Quḍāh states: "He who is not endowed with any thing of the stage beyond the intellect, his intellect would never believe, by means of syllogism, in prophecy. To such a person the belief in prophecy would almost be impossible. For prophecy is a stage beyond the intellect and also beyond the stage of walāyah already referred to. He who does not believe in this, is yet to believe in prophecy; mention not the one who denies the stage of sainthood, which appears in the sphere beyond the intellect, and which precedes the stage of prophecy; such a man, even if he professes his belief verbally or feels in his heart that he believes in the reality of prophecy, he is mistaken. This belief of his is similar to the belief of a blind man who believes in the existence of colour by touching a coloured object; his belief is far removed from the reality of the colour."⁷⁷ He goes on to say, "The belief in prophecy is a belief in the unseen (al-ghayb), which is beyond the power of the intellect; for if the intellect likens that unseen with anything present to his apprehension, that would be remote from what is the real truth."⁷⁸

To the question of how one can attain to the stage beyond the intellect, ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh says: "A human being may attain to that stage when his intellect realizes its incapability of perceiving many things . . . The last of the domains of the objects of the intellect is the

realization of this incapability of the intellect; and this incapability is one of the first things that appear in the stage beyond the intellect."⁷⁹ Here 'Ayn al-Qudāh expresses his purpose by stressing that the intellect alone is incapable of realizing its incapacity to perceive the stage beyond it; therefore, in order to believe in prophecy, which implies belief in the unseen, one must associate oneself with the people of mystical experience, who are endowed with gnosis. For those who are not gifted with the taste (dhawq) of poetry can yet appreciate it by getting together with poets.⁸⁰ He concludes quite clearly that the reality of prophecy is inaccessible to anybody who is not endowed with the Ṣūfī experience. He goes further in attacking the philosophers saying: "He who maintains, as the philosophers do, that the prophet is only a person with extraordinary intellect, who uses his intellect to give commands and prohibitions from his own mind, depending entirely on philosophical experience, has taken his belief off his neck and joined the ranks of the fools."⁸¹

The Philosophers' Position:

Explaining the philosophers' position regarding prophecy Fazlur Rahman says, "The prophet, then, is a person of extraordinary intellectual endowment such that by means of it he is able to know all things by himself without the help of instruction by an external source. Although al-Fārābī and Avicenna agree in this, al-Fārābī nevertheless seems to deem it necessary that the prophetic illumination or revelation be preceded by ordinary philosophical thinking: the prophet's intellect should go through the stages of

development through which an ordinary thinking mind passes; and only then the revelation comes, the only difference between the prophet and the ordinary person is that the former is self-taught."⁸² Here one notices that the position of the prophet is almost reduced to that of an intelligent man, and that there is no direct contact between him and God, as is generally believed by Muslims.

The Position of the Theologians:

The position of the Shī'ites on prophecy is clearly stated by al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1326), who said: "The prophet is a man who brings a message from Allāh without the mediation of any human being . . . Therefore, know that prophecy and its being good (as a source of law) are necessary . . . because wisdom demands the existence of justice which is based on law."⁸³ In the Shī'ites' opinion prophecy is necessary because it is the only means to establish justice on earth. According to them each prophet had a delegate (waṣiyy) or an imām who is considered infallible and who is the only source of law in his community.⁸⁴ The significance of prophecy from the Shī'ite point of view lies in the very fact that the hidden or infallible imām is directly appointed by the Prophet.

Al-Ghazālī, as well as many other Sunnī scholars, maintain that belief in prophecy and in all that the Prophet reveals is necessary, when he says: "The most important thing is that one must free himself from doubt-

ting the existence of God and His attributes . . . and the Prophet of God, by being aware of his truthfulness and the truthfulness of what he reveals to us."⁸⁵ But in al-Iqtisād, al-Ghazālī neither discusses this problem in full nor gives a mystical explanation for it, as he does in al-Munqidh where he says, "Prophecy is a stage in which there is an eye, full of light, through which the unseen is shown as well as other things that the intellect would not perceive."⁸⁶ Fazlur Rahman understands al-Ghazālī as placing the prophets in a distinct species above men, just as the human species is distinguished from those of other animals. He quotes al-Ghazālī as saying that prophecy is a divine gift which cannot be acquired by any effort.⁸⁷

One major difference between 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's opinion on prophecy and that of other Muslim theologians - Sunnī, Shī'ite and Mu'tazilite - is that while the others conceive prophecy as the source of the sharī'ah (as based on the Qur'ān, "We have sent among you an apostle, one of yourselves, to recite our sign to you, to teach you the book and the wisdom and to teach you what you did not know" (2.146)), 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, like the philosophers, conceives it as a source of knowledge, but unlike them, he conceives it as another sphere of knowledge, above that of the intellect.⁸⁸ In this sphere of prophecy, the instruction is given directly by God, and it is equally shared by both the Prophet and the saints.⁸⁹ It is perhaps for this reason that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's interest was mainly focussed on prophecy rather than on the Prophet. He discusses prophecy as an essential basis of belief in the Prophet, who occupies the office of prophecy, whereas the

others, including the philosophers, take the Prophet as the basis for establishing the position of prophecy; that is to say, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh looks at the Prophet through his office while the others look from the opposite angle. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is more interested in the office than in the person who occupies the office; there seems to be a mystical reason for this. As a mystic he believes that he has gained his mystical experience from the very source from which the Prophet draws his knowledge; that is the sphere beyond the intellect. It is therefore more relevant to discuss that source than the man who is associated with it.

III

The Hereafter

All the theological schools in Islām are agreed that belief in the hereafter is one of the fundamental principles of Islām. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1327) in his explanation of the Muslim faith has cited a Hadīth of the Prophet in which he says: " . . . Faith consists of belief in the existence of God, His angels, His books, His apostles, the hereafter and predestination, be it good or evil. What is meant by the hereafter is another life after death in which those who obeyed the prophets of God on earth will be rewarded and those who disobeyed them will be punished."⁹⁰

Concerning this problem, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh has made a genuine attempt to curb the arrogance of the heretical position of the philosophers on the hereafter and to re-establish the creed of Islām in a less vulnerable and

more effective manner. In his opinion belief in the hereafter is belief in the unseen (al-ghayb). He maintains that it is impossible to arrive there except after passing out of this world, whether by death or by annihilation. He says: "Unless the earth is changed into something else, and heaven too, it will be impossible for any one to arrive at the hereafter. If you understand that, you should know that the human soul has various stages which are almost beyond limit and number."⁹¹ One may venture to state that what is meant by earth and heaven here is nothing but material existence and man's dependence on the intellect as the only source of knowledge. "The affairs of the hereafter are a mystery to human knowledge; none is expected to comprehend anything about them until he rids himself of the shackles of imagination and the tricks of the intellect . . . As long as a traveller remains outside the veils of the earth and the heavens, the Day of Judgement would not be set for him; for this day is inside the veils because God Himself is inside the veils, and the knowledge of the Hour is with Him."⁹² According to him the belief in the hereafter, in so far as the intellect goes, should be acquired in the same way that a blind man acquires his belief in the existence of colour. He says, "You should first think of how it is that the blind man must, when he believes in the existence of colour through the unseen, cut off his sight from the four senses and their objects until he could believe in the unseen without any comparison."⁹³ When one examines his views in Tamhīdāt concerning this problem, one may get the impression that he is closer to the position of the philosophers who deny the material existence of the

hereafter, than to that of the Islamic dogma which affirms it. For in Tamhīdāt he tries to explain the hereafter and its affairs by means of exemplification (tamthīl) and says that the proof (which he considers as the first grave) of the hereafter is the human body itself; that is to say that the existence of the human body is the punishment (punishment) in the grave is the traveller's suffering while striving to purify his soul). To explain al-Munkir and al-Nakīr, the two angels who will question the dead in the graves, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh quotes Ibn Sīnā's saying that al-Munkir is the good deed and al-Nakīr is the evil deed. About Paradise and Hell, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, states that the former is the vision of God and the latter is being separated from Him.⁹⁴ In short, according to him, in Tamhīdāt, the hereafter is inside oneself. This seems to suggest that he believes neither in bodily resurrection nor in the material existence of Paradise and Hell, as maintained by 'Usayrān.⁹⁵ It is my own opinion that in order to understand 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's position on this problem, we must look at him on two different levels of explanation: direct and metaphorical. His explanation of the hereafter and such matters, in both the Zubdah and the Shakwā, falls into the first level whereas his explanation of them in the Tamhīdāt falls into the second level. Though it could be stated that 'Ayn al-Quḍāh appears in the latter to be very rational, it could however be wrong to take this metaphorical explanation of his as a denial of the physical existence of the hereafter and such matters, as already maintained by 'Usayrān, since his explanation of this problem in the Zubdah and

the Shakwā is in total agreement with Islamic dogma vis-à-vis the hereafter. In the Shakwā, which he wrote shortly before he died, 'Ayn al-Qudāh states that if the intellect realizes the truthfulness of the prophets and that no lie is conceivable of them, then one would be obliged to believe all that they revealed, such as the matter of the hereafter, the scale (al-mīzān), the bridge (al-ṣirāt) and also Paradise and Hell . . . this is the true belief to which all earlier righteous religious leaders adhered by consensus. He maintains that most of the matters of the hereafter can be conceived only through the light of prophecy and by the prophets, only very few of them are conceived by the saints. The reason why we do not hear what is going on in the grave is that we are in the material world while the grave is in the spiritual world.⁹⁶ Considering his two levels of explaining the hereafter and such matters (that is, the unseen world), one can see a genuine attempt by 'Ayn al-Qudāh to reconcile the dogmatic viewpoint and that of the mystics on this subtle problem; that is the esoteric interpretation of 'alam al-ghayb as opposed to the exoteric one.

The Shī'ite Position:

Al-Hillī, the Shī'ite scholar, has stated that what is meant by the hereafter, is a new existence for bodies and their return after their death and decomposition; and is real and comes to pass, contrary to the belief of the philosophers.⁹⁷ The position of the philosophers concerning this problem is that they do not accept the principle of the hereafter without question. Under the pressure of their own rationalization they were unable to

conceive of bodily resurrection. Although they did not deny the hereafter, they interpreted it as being a spiritual resurrection, holding that bodily resurrection is impossible. Their position was severely deplored and vigorously attacked by the Sunnī scholars, especially al-Ghazālī who said in his Tahāfut, "Their errors are found under twenty headings, in three of which they must be reckoned as infidels and on seven as heretics. One of the three is their disbelief in the bodily resurrection."⁹⁸

It is now quite obvious that 'Ayn al-Qudāh's opinion on the hereafter is in complete contrast with those of the theologians and the literalist scholars, for while they hold that the unseen is not accessible to human perception 'Ayn al-Qudāh maintains that the unseen is a mystery, but only to the intellect and human imagination and not to the eyes of the mystic.⁹⁹ There cannot be any means other than Ṣūfism by which the affairs of the hereafter could be apprehended; therefore the real belief in it, depends entirely on the opening of a gnostic eye in the heart of the mystics.¹⁰⁰ It was through such a gnostic eye that 'Ayn al-Qudāh was able to see the hereafter and tried to explain it in esoteric language by means of metaphor.

'Ayn al-Qudāh and al-Ghazālī on
the Limit of the Intellect.

In this work of 'Ayn al-Qudāh one can see how great is the importance which he attaches to the mystical

experience as the only source for the acquisition of a real understanding of Islām, and for that matter, a genuine belief in prophecy. He holds that if the purpose of all religious sciences is to teach believers how to acquire genuine belief in their religion on the one hand, and how to defend their faith against heretics and unbelievers on the other hand, then one can safely assume that the aim of these religious sciences is yet to be achieved. For the scholastic theologians have so far failed to apply the correct and the most effective method to understand the reality of prophecy and its spiritual importance. Here one can venture to say that if Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī had the honour of being the one who married Ṣūfism to Sunnī orthodoxy,¹⁰¹ then ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh should have the honour of being the one who made Ṣūfism a basic element which no true believer can overlook. Both al-Ghazālī and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh were Sunnī scholars who converted to Ṣūfism and regarded it as the only resort to save themselves and their fellow Muslims from the pitfalls of speculative science. Since both of them have discussed at length the position and the limit of the intellect, a brief comparison of their views on this topic is necessary. Al-Ghazālī maintains in his al-Munqidh and Mishkāt that prophecy, the unseen, and the hereafter are beyond the sphere of the intellect; he says: "Beyond the intellect is another sphere to which another eye is opened, and by it the unseen and what happens in the future are really seen, and other things from which the intellect is isolated, just as the faculty of discretion (quwwat al-tamyīz) is isolated from perceiving the objects of the intellect."¹⁰² When we turn to ‘Ayn al-Quḍāh we find him saying almost

the same thing, for he holds that genuine belief in God's sempiternal knowledge and the unseen, depends entirely on the appearance of a light in the human heart. This light appears only in the sphere beyond the intellect; and unless this light has appeared, none is expected to have a genuine belief in God and His eternal attributes.¹⁰³ Thus both of them have established another sphere of knowledge beyond that of the intellect. Al-Ghazālī goes on to say that the prophets are the doctors of the heart's diseases (amrāḍ al-qulūb), and the benefit of the intellect is to make us know this fact, and to profess the truthfulness of prophecy as well as to recognise its own incapability of apprehending what is normally perceived through the eye of prophecy. Then it should guide us and hand us over to that sphere, in the same manner a blind man is handed over to his guide and the sick, perplexed people are submitted to merciful physicians.¹⁰⁴

'Ayn al-Quḍāh also holds that the last domain of the intellect is to realize its incapability of perceiving many existent things; this realization of its incapacity represents the first thing that appears in the stage beyond the intellect. He who is not endowed with the light of the sphere beyond the intellect is unable to believe either in prophecy or in the unseen; for both of these belong to the sphere beyond the intellect.

This propinquity of opinion between al-Ghazālī and 'Ayn al-Quḍāh on a given problem shows us how great

was al-Ghazālī's influence on our hero. Both are quite explicit in asserting the limit and the erroneous nature of the intellect insofar as intuitive discoveries are concerned. Thus they conclude that the comprehension of mysteries in the unseen world is beyond the sphere of the intellect. However, a careful examination of their works discloses that the two masters do not always share the same position in matters of a dogmatic nature. For, although both of them advocated the idea of the limit of the intellect and conceived prophecy and the unseen as spheres beyond the sphere of the intellect, al-Ghazālī seems to have slackened his position concerning the sphere beyond the intellect as the only means to understanding the truth of the dogma. In other words, despite his conversion to Ṣūfism and his rejection of scholastic theology, al-Ghazālī remained a loyal theologian until he died;¹⁰⁵ that is, he did not completely abandon theology for the sake of Ṣūfism, whereas 'Ayn al-Quḍāh turned his face completely away from everything but Ṣūfism, and remained a very devoted Ṣūfī until his death. As a matter of fact, it was his limitless devotion to Ṣūfism that caused him to lose his life.¹⁰⁶

It is the opinion of Montgomery Watt, that al-Ghazālī's career seems to fall into two distinct spheres: one in which he was a scholastic theologian, and the other in which he largely rejected scholastic theology.¹⁰⁷ This seems to be the most widely accepted view among contemporary scholars, Farid Jabre's opposition notwithstanding. In Jabre's opinion, al-Ghazālī's interpretation of the

dogma keeps strictly to the Ash'artie system.¹⁰⁸

As for 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, there can be no room to question the unity and continuity of this thought; for this reason he criticises al-Ghazālī's theological method of establishing the eternity of God through motion. He states that most of the speculative scholars who have discussed the problem of the eternity of God and His attributes and have tried to establish them through motion have gone astray. He says, "for even if this is a clearcut way, and can really satisfy the objectives, it is a long way to go because by it one must establish premises unnecessary for the one who uses the right method (the method of the mystics) . . . al-Ghazālī wrote in his book al-Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād, some ten pages on the affirmation of the eternal Being. Upon my life! al-Ghazālī was excused in that because this book of his is written in the method of speculative scholars."¹⁰⁹

Another area of difference between 'Ayn al-Quḍāh and al-Ghazālī is that the latter was opposed to the incarnation doctrine (al-hulūl) of Ṣūfism while the former even advocated it, saying: "My friend, if you wish to have everlasting happiness you should accompany an incarnate - a Ṣūfī - for a short while so that you will know who is the incarnationist . . . when the shaykh says that the Ṣūfī is God, it is the identity doctrine he means."¹¹⁰ However, despite the fact that al-Ghazālī and 'Ayn al-Quḍāh have sometimes taken different stands on matters of a dogmatic nature, the fact remains that their views on the intellect and its limit are almost identical.

Each maintains that there exists a sphere beyond the intellect in which the unseen things are disclosed; this is the sphere of walāyah and nubuwwah.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is here related to Mayanah, a town in Adharbayjān where his grandfather came from. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Sam'ānī, Kitāb al-Ansāb, ed. Margoliought (London: Luzac Co. Ltd., 1912), p. 547.
2. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Taqiyy al-Dīn al-Subkī, Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā (Cairo: Maṭba'ah al-Ḥusayniyyah al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), p. 87.
3. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā Gharīb al-Awṭān ilā 'Ulamā' al-Buldān, ed. 'Afīf 'Usayrān (Ṭihrān: 1341 solar A.H.), p. 6.
4. Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Nāṣir b. 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī, Akḥbār al-Dawlah al-Saljūqiyyah, ed. Muḥammad Iqbāl (Lahore: University of Panjab, 1933), p. 67f.
5. A. Bausani, "Religion in the Saljūq Period," The Cambridge History of Irān, ed. J. A. Boyle (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 290.
6. His opponents have misinterpreted his ideas on prophecy, the emanation of creatures from God and the importance of the shaykh; thus they accused him of heresy. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, pp. 9-11.
7. Ibid., p. 15f.
8. Al-Subkī, Tabaqāt, p. 236.

9. Infra, p. 52f.
10. Infra, p. 60.
11. Infra, p. 61.
12. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A'yān wa Anbā' al-Zamān, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1948), I, p. 80f. Cf. Raḥīm Farmanish, Aḥvāl va Athār-i-'Ayn al-Quḍāh (Ṭihrān: Chāp Aftāb, 1338 solar A.H.), pp. 21-25.
13. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, ed. 'Afīf 'Usayrān (Ṭihrān: Chāpkhānah Dānishgāh, 1341 solar A.H.), Introduction, p. 62f. Cf. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad Jamī, Nafaḥāt al-Uns min Ḥadrāt al-Quds, ed. Maḥdī Tawḥīdī Pūr (Ṭihrān: Kitābfrūsh-i-Sa'dī, 1335 solar A.H.), p. 416.
14. Raḥīm Farmanish, Aḥvāl va Athār, p. 25f.
15. Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Alī al-Qāsim al-Bayhaqī, Tatimmat Siwān al-Ḥikmah (Lahore: L. Ishawar Das, 1935), p. 117f.
16. Farmanish, Aḥvāl va Athār, p. 27.
17. Al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt, IV, 236.
18. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, p. 15f.
19. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, pp. 7-11; Cf. al-Subkī, Ṭabaqāt, p. 236f; al-Bayhaqī, Tatimmah, p. 118.

20. Imām 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid al-Iṣfahānī, Tārīkh Al al-Saljūq (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Mawsū'āt, 1900), p. 137f.
21. Muḥammad 'Alī Tabrīzī, Rayḥanāt al-Adab fī Tarājīm al-Ma'rūfīn bi al-Kunyah wa al-Laḡab (Ṭīhrān: Sharikat-i-Sahāmī, 1369 solar A.H.), III, 145.
22. Al-Bayhaqī, Tatimmah, p. 117f.
23. Infra, p. 101 f.
24. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, Introduction, p. 12. Both 'Usayrān in his editorial introduction to 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's Tamhīdāt (pp. 9-14) and Farmanish in his Aḥval va Āthār (pp. 126-160) give a good sketch of these letters, their contents and their whereabouts.
25. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 48.
26. G. Von Grunebaum, "Muslim Civilization in the Abbasid Period," The Cambridge Medieval History (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966), IV, Part I, p. 91.
27. H. A. R. Gibb, "Interpretation of Islamic History," The Traditional Near East, ed. J. Stewart-Robinson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), pp. 6-35.
28. H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism (New York: Galaxy Books, 1962), p. 140.

29. M. G. S. Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," The Cambridge History of Iran, V, 436-438.
30. Tj. De Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, tr. Edward R. Jones (London: Luzac, 1961), p. 125.
31. Ibid., p. 158.
32. Fritz Meier, "Stambuler Handschriften dreier persischer Mystiker: 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, Najm al-Dīn al-Dāja," Der Islam, XXII-XXIV (1935-1937) 1-9. Cf. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, Introduction, p. 5f.
33. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Zubdah; Infra, p. 56.
34. Ibid., p. 55.
35. Hodgson, "The Ismā'īlī State," pp. 436f, 457f.
36. Infra, p. 93.
37. For sources of the list of the books we have given here see Fritz Meier, Der Islam, XXII-XXIV, 1-9; Cf. 'Afīf 'Usayrān in his editorial introduction to 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's Tamhīdāt, 5f, and Raḥīm Farmanish Ahvāl va Athār, pp. 103-165.
38. Infra, p. 68.

39. Infra, p. 108. By "weak-minded," 'Ayn al-Quḍāh may be referring to al-Ghazālī (of course not Ghazālī in al-Mishkāṭ but) in al-Iqtisād in which he seems to be suggesting some difference between al-quḍrah and al-irādah. If the "weak-minded" reference is really to al-Ghazālī, then one can say that the disagreement between 'Ayn al-Quḍāh and al-Ghazālī is rather deep. Cf. al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtisād, p. 101f.
40. Infra, p. 79.
41. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn, ed. Muḥammad Muḥy al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1369/1950), I, 229.
42. Infra, p. 106f.
43. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh probably refers here to both the Mu'tazilites and the philosophers who deny the existence of the divine attributes; Cf. al-Sharastānī, Nihāyat al-Iqdām fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, ed. Alfred Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 180f.
44. Infra, p. 108. Here 'Ayn al-Quḍāh may be referring to the anthropomorphists (al-mushabbihah); Cf. al-Shahrastānī, al-Milāl wa al-Nihāl, ed. Muḥammad b. Faṭḥ Allāh Badrān (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglū al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), I, 95-99.

45. 'Alī b. Anjab al-Sā'ī, Akḥbār al-Ḥallāj, ed. Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus (Paris: Maṭba'at al-Qalam, 1936), p. 16; Cf. Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādhī, al-Ta'arruf li Madhhab Ahl al-Taṣawwuf, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1960), p. 64, where this statement is attributed to Muḥammad b. Wāsi'.
46. Infra, p. 84.
47. Al-Sā'ī, Akḥbār al-Ḥallāj, p. 75.
48. Infra, p. 161. In Tamhīdāt p. 257 'Ayn al-Quḍāh quotes al-Ḥallāj as saying the same thing.
49. Al-Ghazālī, Maqāṣid, pp. 288-292.
50. Infra, p. 115f.
51. Infra, p. 77f.
52. Infra, p. 77.
53. Infra, p. 127.
54. Al-Ghazālī, Mishkāṭ al-Anwār, ed. Abū al-'Alā' 'Afīfī, (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa Nashr, 1384/1964), p. 55.
55. Ibid., p. 54.
56. Infra, p. 174.

57. Infra, p. 77f. For the ḥadīth see Farūz Anfar, Abādīth-i-Maṭhnawī (Ṭihrān: Dānishgāh Ṭihrān, 1334 solar A.H.), p. 29.
58. Infra, p. 106.
59. Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, I, 229f.
60. Al-Shahrastānī, Nihāyah, p. 181.
61. Infra, p. 108.
62. Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal, I, 50f.
63. Al-Ash'arī, Maqālāt, I, 225f.
64. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, Risālāt al-I'tiqād, ed. & tr. Asaf A. A. Fyzee, (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 30f.
65. Al-Shahrastānī, Nihāyah, p. 181.
66. Soheil M. Afnān, Avicenna, his life and works (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), pp. 173-175.
67. Infra, p. 93f. Cf. al-Ghazālī, al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl ed. Jamīl Ṣalībā & Kamil 'Ayyad (Bayrūt: al-Lujnah al-Dawliyyah li Tarjumat al-Rawā'i', 1959), p. 41f.
68. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 44f.
69. Infra, p. 95. Cf. al-Tirmīdhī, Khatm al-Awliyā', p. 369f; al-Kalābādhī, al-Ta'arruf, p. 72.

70. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 8f.
71. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 44f. Cf. Hermann Landolt, "L'Epître sur le Soufisme de Nūroddīn 'Abdorrahīmāne Esfārayenī, 639/1242-717/1317, intitulée "Kāshef ol-Asrār," " Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Vè Section LXXII (1964-65), 154f. Landolt quotes al-Isfarāyīnī who quotes al-Tirmīdhī as saying that the beginning of the Awliyā' is the end of the Anbiya'.
72. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, p. 45f.
73. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, commentary introduction, p. 8f.
74. Al-Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Maḥjūb, p. 235f.
75. H. Landolt, "L'Epître sur le Soufisme," loc. cit.
76. Henry Corbin, "De la Philosophie prophétique en Islam Shi'ite," Eranos-Jahrbuch, XXXI (1962), 78f. Cf. Louis Massignon, La Passion d'al-Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, (Paris: Librairie Orientale Paul Geuthner, 1922), p. 747f.
77. Infra, p. 95.
78. Infra, p. 95f.
79. Infra, p. 101f.
80. Infra, p. 96.

81. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 45.
82. Fazlur Rahman, Prophecy in Islam (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958), p. 30.
83. Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. 'Alī al-Muṭahhir al-Ḥillī, Al-Bāb al-Ḥādī 'Asharah, tr. William M. Miller (London: The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1958), p. 54f.
84. Ibn Bābawayh, Risālah, p. 92f.
85. Al-Ghazālī, Iqtisād, p. 221f.
86. Al-Ghazālī, al-Munqidh, p. 42.
87. F. Rahman, Prophecy in Islam, p. 96.
88. Supra, p. 88.
89. Infra, p. 150.
90. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, p. 45f.
91. Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Imān, (Damascus: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1381/1961), p. 3.
92. Infra, p. 186f.
93. Infra, p. 182.

94. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, pp. 288-292.
95. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, 'Usayrān's Commentary, p. 3.
96. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, pp. 45-47.
97. Ḥillī, Bāb al-Ḥādī 'Ashar, p. 82.
98. Al-Ghazālī, Tahāfut, p. 179.
99. Al-Tirmīdhī, Khatm al-Awliyā, p. 393f.
100. Infra, p. 189.
101. H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, pp. 140-142.
102. Al-Ghazālī, al-Munqidh, p. 41f.
103. Infra, p. 88.
104. Al-Ghazālī, al-Munqidh, p. 46; Mishkāt, p. 77f.
105. Montgomery Watt, "The Study of al-Ghazālī," Oriens, XIII-XIV (1960-61), 125.
106. Supra, p. 6.
107. Montgomery Watt, "The Study of al-Ghazālī," p. 124.
108. F. Raḥmān, "Farid Jabre: La notion de la Ma'rifah chez al-Ghazālī," B.S.O.A.S., XXII, 363.

109. Infra, p. 67.

110. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh, Tamhīdāt, p. 299f.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSLATION OF ZUBDAT AL-HAQĀ'IQ

Preface

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise be to Him for bestowing on me lasting blessings which are full of pleasure and which I enjoy continuously all days. I seek blessings for the greatest son of Adam, the best one who gives the world its beauty, Muḥammad, the law-giver (Shāri') of Islām, and the one who invites Men and Jinnsto the abode of peace. I also seek blessings for his family who are guided by his light, and his Companions who followed his traditions.

This gleam is entitled Zubdat al-Haqā'iq - The Extract of the Truths. It comprises the discovery of the three principles upon which all creatures base their worship. It is divided into one hundred chapters, and is embellished with subtlety on all aspects. It is a complete provision for the student studying the principles of religion and a sufficient treasure for the objectives of the mystics who embark on the study of certitude. I mentioned in Risālat al-'Alā'iyah which I wrote on the doctrine of the righteous Ancients (al-salaf) - may God

be pleased with them all and those who follow their way - certain things about these principles which are indispensable for the belief of the common people. I also explain in these chapters that which will satisfy the ardent desires of the élite. After seeking God's guidance, He inspired in me the thoughts for which I have no alternative but to postulate them. If there were any other choice the will of God would not lead me to these directions. No servant of God ever seeks His guidance concerning any religious or worldly matters without finding it easy to achieve his ultimate goal.

My brethren expected this from me since I was pre-occupied with the studies to acquire knowledge and to make use of it. I devoted my time, day and night, increasing it. Then, my brethren's hope in having this book written died out after I ceased seeking after knowledge, and diverted my interest from it. Thus my aversion to knowledge developed to such an extent that I dismissed the idea that I would be ready one day for, or be pre-occupied with any kind of literary work. My heart was drowned in the depth of an endless ocean, in which the Ancients and their successors have been drowned. There is no safeguard for them to rely on, nor is there any place for them to take refuge. Then I met one sincere brother of mine, who desired to understand the real opinion of the 'Ulamā' about the principles of religion (Uṣūl al-Dīn) and the stand of those who hold to the way of deductive method (philosophers). When I found that he was in need of guidance in the way that he followed, I devoted some days of my life to him. This created some confusion in my mind (heart), but the sincerity of his demand satisfied my soul to endure the

the task. However, when I sought God's guidance He removed the doubting thoughts, and facilitated this work; thus I found no difficulty in it. Then my heart was eased by the Prophet's statement - may God give him peace and blessing - "Whoever seeks guidance from God will never fail".¹ So I started composing these chapters to which I gave a preface that includes explanations of the original motive for composing them. I mention at the end of them certain tasks that anyone who reads the book must undertake so that he may derive a great benefit from it.

May God Almighty give benefit to everyone who ever looks at this book, and consolidate his heart with purity, so that he can perceive its meaning entirely. God is the only One whose bond of blessing is to be adhered to, whose assistance is to be sought over the accomplishment of every matter. He is sufficient for me. What an excellent Guardian!

Preface of the exposition of the Primary Motive
which dictates this gleam.

There are two important objectives which prompted me to this: the first objective is a response to the persistent need of my brethren. A group of my brethren - may God Almighty enable me to fulfil the obligation for their comradeship and fellowship, and help me to do my duty towards their fellowship - used to suggest that I compose a few chapters in which I would mention to what extent rational speculation could go concerning the knowledge of the Essence of God Almighty, the most Exalted, and His Attributes, and the belief in the reality of Prophecy and the day of judgement; and that I compose these concepts

in print that would impress the eloquent with their preciseness and overwhelm the devoted speculative scholar with their inimitability. The obstacle of time and the adversity of circumstances however, diverted me from undertaking what their desires hinged upon, and to which their aspirations have been focused. Furthermore, when I saw them in dire need of that, especially the belief in the reality of prophecy, and that of the Divine attributes with which the Creator (Fāṭir) of the Heavens and Earths is described, I decided that directing (my) concern to the explanation of that was of capital importance.

In my treatise entitled Ghāyat al-Baḥth 'an ma'ānī al-Ba'th (The Ultimate Search for the Concept of Resurrection), I discussed prophecy and what is connected with it - scientific premises - in such a way that would satisfy the burning thirst of a conscientious student, and the requirements of the speculative scholar who takes pride in his correctness of speculation.

But since the belief in the reality of prophecy in that book is based on the knowledge of certitude ('ilm al-yaqīn), and is acquired by means of the demonstrative method, while what reason perceives concerning the reality of prophecy is, in general terms, due to the affirmation of something for the prophets without perceiving anything of the reality of that thing and its essence, this belief is further remote from the belief that is acquired by the man of taste for the reality of prophecy.

The belief in the reality of prophecy that is

acquired by means of rational knowledge is almost similar to the belief in the existence of something of a general nature in a poem by a person with no taste for poetry. For he who is not endowed with a taste for poetry may also be able to acquire certain beliefs in the existence of something possessed by the man of taste. But his belief is far from the reality characteristic of the man of taste for poetry.

I was twenty-one years old at the time I composed that treatise and I am now twenty-four. The sempiternal mercy has bestowed upon me, during these three years, varieties of esoteric knowledge and precious intuitive states which are beyond my ability to explain, or to describe. Most of these varieties of knowledge are impossible to explain in the domain of those who express themselves through consonants and vowels. I will do my best to mention some novelties in these chapters, in the best way and with the most polished expressions. The plain truth is that most of the words (terms) mentioned in this book are extremely ambiguous. If you see in them a term which does not convey accurately the formulated meaning in its mould, do not unfold (extend) an objecting tongue to it; for I have in this two obvious excuses:

The first one is that I was too much concerned with the formulation of concepts to occupy myself with selecting words; for that reason, I did not set them in the most proper manner. However, the mention of these concepts by expressions suitable to them with no ambiguity is not almost impossible but is indeed certainly impossible.

The second excuse is that I composed these chapters for people who are not bothered by ambiguity of terms to perceive the reality of the concepts. Because of their ceaseless practice of intellectual facts (realities), they have become such that the understanding of the material world (al-mulk) does not prevent them from attaining the intimacy with the spiritual world (al-malakūt).²

The second objective is that these chapters be a treasure that would help students avoid the pitfalls of knowledge, for the path to God Almighty and Most Exalted is a rugged one, very difficult to pass through, and is full of innumerable rough seas, burning fires, towering mountains, open deserts full of thunders, and obstacles which are difficult for the eyes to see and impossible for the tongues to describe. Every one who treads this path may think of himself as being among those who have arrived (to the knowledge of God). All creatures have gone astray save those whom Almighty has protected with His grace and generosity, so that they are guided in the right path and led on into the right direction. May God Almighty, Most Exalted save us from being deluded by a shiny mirage in our course (path) and protect us from misleading obstacles, until He brings us to the sweetest water. He has power over all things.

Indeed, among the things in which some eminent skilful 'Ulamā' from amongst the speculative scholars have erred is their judgement that the acquisition of knowledge of the Essence of God and His attributes through the process of learning is the ultimate happiness and the highest

degree of honour (knowledge). This is a gross ignorance which has engulfed the most erudite scholars who sit on the peak of knowledge, not to speak of beginners who are yet to arrive. He who thinks that the knowledge of the Essence of the Beloved and His Attributes is the very arrival to Him is entirely misled; and he who holds that being caught between the claws of a ferocious beast and knowing about it is one and the same thing, is in the very bottom of the chasm of ignorance. He would be like speculative scholars in their delusion by their false thoughts and contradictory opinions. However, the arrival at what they claim of the foresaid knowledge is extremely precious because it rarely happens, and for only few individuals in disparate time.

When I found the situation as such and (also) found in myself a desire to tackle this problem and to remove the veil from the face of truth I became determined to compose (dictate) these chapters so that students in the path of seeking knowledge may take it as a treasure, so that they may be saved from its pitfalls. Whoever joins the 'ulamā' in the search of knowledge without recognizing that beyond his single objectives there are others, his foot would slip, his regret would be great, and his slippings would be irreparable and (very) apparent, and then his errors and garrulous deeds would be of no use to him. This is so because the tendency among those who believe that they have reached their objective and come through with flying success (colours) is that they cease seeking knowledge and become uninterested in anything beyond that. This kind of belief is destructive. For those who tread

the path of knowledge without experiencing this thoroughly, it would be inconceivable to understand what I say.

I embarked on this path and looked into the meagre and obese (lesser and greater) aspects of knowledge, and studied all useful and harmful sides of it, until I had acquired all that in which I was interested. I however, did not pay attention to that which was of lesser value, nor was I inclined to it, knowing that knowledge is vast and that life is short; and hence, spending it (life) in acquiring what is valueless in sheer foolishness.

My reason for plunging into every branch of knowledge was an obvious one; a drowning person would cling to anything he could reach to save his life. I was on the brink of a pit of fire, had I not been rescued by His grace and generosity. The reason for that was that I used to study the books of theology in an attempt to rise up from the depth of "imitation" (taqlīd) to the peak of "intuition" (al-baṣīrah). Unfortunately, I did not achieve my objective. As a result, the principles of the various theological schools confused me so much so that I fell into dilemmas which cannot be explained in this brief treatise (al-lum'ah) and there is no benefit in narrating them to others; for that may cause great damage to those who are of limited understanding and narrow minds. I was therefore so puzzled about my own affair that life became loathsome (munaghghas) until I was guided by the Guide of the perplexed to the right path, and His benevolence bestowed upon me assistance and success. Speaking

generally, I was only re-animated from my falls, after the blessing of God Almighty, by studying the books of al-Shaykh al-Imām Ḥujjat al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, may God be pleased with him and make him satisfied. I studied these books for nearly four years, during which period of pre-occupation with knowledge I saw numerous wonders; these have saved me from infidelity, misguidance, confusion and blindness onto this path. The explanation of this is beyond words and defies comprehension and enumeration. It is too difficult to be thoroughly investigated.

When I achieved my objective of knowledge, and thought that I had reached my target I started repeating to myself the words of a poet:

Alight in the quarters of Zaynab
And Rabāb, (and) revel freely,
These are the pastures of the
beloved.

While settling down and bringing my camel to a halt for some rest and relief from a long night's journey, my inner-eye began to be opened. I do not mean the insight of reason, lest you be deluded by your intellect ('aql). The intuitive vision occurred little by little. During this time I realized the obstacles that almost blocked my way to what is beyond knowledge. I remained in this state for about a year without fully realizing what happened to me in that year, until my master (al-Shaykh) the great Imām, Sulṭān of the path (ṭarīqah), the interpreter of the "Truth," Abū al-Futūḥ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī - may God bestow His blessings on the

Muslims through his survival - was led by fate to Hamadān my birth place. There and in his service the veil of confusion about what happened to me was removed in less than twenty days. I witnessed the clarity of the situation. Then "something" was revealed to me, which left me with nothing else to seek, except what God wishes. It is now many years ago since I did nothing but seek after the annihilation in "that thing." I seek assistance from God to complete what I devoted myself to. If I were to live as long as Nūḥ did³ and were to spend this (long) life in searching for this "thing" life would be too short for the "thing." May God bestow His mercy on Abū Firās⁴ when he says:

In the search for greatness,
Our persons we underrate;
For he who seeks to betrothe the belle,
Should no dowry overrate.

That "thing" used to spread throughout the world. I saw it in whatever caught my eye.

His face is everywhere and wherever
You meet him, he is the moon.

May God not bless any moment (breath) which does not further deepen my vision of Him. How excellent is Abū Ṭayyib.⁵ This poem of his gives some utterances about it (the subject):

For the sharp ends of lances
We deserted all that is gay;
With none but them do we play
The belles are not the desire
Of my heart and my fingers are
No vehicle for wine-glasses.

He who does not sacrifice his life or exert his efforts in an attempt to achieve noble goals is deceived. How excellent is the statement of al-Mawsawī when he said:

If I do not risk danger for her, kill plenty
And fight valiantly in her defence,
Why did I this sword of mine sharpen,
And why did I this lance of mine make long?

I pray to God Almighty to provide me with His support and crown my efforts with success; so that I would achieve my ultimate objective.

I pleaded with the wind to blow a breath of air
On my needs when I found fresh air between your
 hands
I might have grown desperate but (now) I say no,
 for He
Who guarantees success is a generous One.

I shall continue leading my powerful camel until I am free from the shackle of time and place. I will then settle my camel on a most pleasant place and elevate myself to the company of the one who is the best companion.

If my wishes are true they should be the best
 wishes
For we have lived by them through a prosperous
 time.

The higher ambitions do not hinder the pure soul from reaching Muḥammad's presence,

When the camels have brought us to Muḥammad,
Their backs are prohibited for other men.
Having brought us to the best one who touches
 Earth
We owe them sanctity and protection.

The discussion of such a thing is too long so I would rather start to explain the principles and say that the most important thing that I ought to begin with in these

chapters, after giving praise to God by whose praise every book is begun, and seeking peace for His Prophet and His worshipper Muḥammad, is to inform you that most people would not really benefit from this book; for that is important in itself. However, at the end of these chapters I shall devise a method that, if followed, would leave one most rewarded by this book.

Chapter I

"The believers are divided into four categories concerning the mission of Prophets".

You should know that those who believe in the happiness of the "hereafter" and those who seek after it fall into four categories:

The first category:

These are those who believe in what was brought to them by the prophets. They believe in God, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Prophets and in the Last Day (al-yawm al-Akhir). In this belief they do not need any intellectual investigation as it is the custom of speculative scholars. This group will not benefit by looking into this book, because none of them would need to know anything about its contents. Certainly, it is possible for these people to benefit from this book if only they will make use of it; but it is not important for such people to study it.

The second category:

These are the 'ulamā' who depend on exoteric knowledge ¹

and who employ a method of research which is not satisfactory amongst authoritative scholars because they have imitated some of the adherents of certain schools (al-madhāhib) and follow them in all aspects of their proofs. However, these people are better than the first category. They have also no need to look into this book, perhaps, because they will not benefit from it, even if they look into it.

The third category:

These are the speculative scholars who claim not to imitate anyone in respect to their convictions, rather they employ intellectual research and deductive method with regard to their belief. The method used by this group in seeking after knowledge is the best, except that when they cover different levels of knowledge (when they make great achievement of knowledge) they think that they have reached total perfection in what they are seeking.

The delusion of these people over their achievement of speculative sciences is great, for they think that acquiring knowledge of God is to reach Him; and that this is the desired happiness itself. You see one of them devoting his time day and night on seeking after the world (dunyā) and its lusts, claiming that, such a behaviour does not harm anyone like him and that his action is an attempt to seek for the fodder of a camel and the submission to the injunctions of God Almighty, the most Exalted; for, God says "You should not forget your share in life" (78.77). This is a great folly which is very difficult to get rid of except by one who is guided by sempiternal

providence ('ināyah azaliyyah). These people also will not benefit from reading this book. You would notice that when they look into this book, they become pedantic and say, "if we do not imitate (follow blindly) the Prophets without rational proof based on truthfulness of what they say, how can we follow others? What then would be the difference between us and the common people if we follow a man blindly, be he a prophet or not?"² This is a gross disaster for all philosophers except those whom God saved through His blessing, and these are very few indeed. What would be better than the intellectual method, were it not filled with such disaster; those who claimed that they could tread this road without being destroyed by these perils are ignorant; and they will certainly realize what I have said about following this method, and then it will be too late for them to benefit from their knowledge.

The fourth category:

This is a small group of people who follow the method of rational knowledge; but when they go through its levels and overcome its obstacles, they will not be completely satisfied. He who acquires the necessary knowledge and the certainty of the existence of the Creator, the Most High and Most Sanctified, and the existence of his attributes and finds (through this way) that his fervent desire has been quenched, he is not one of those referred to at all; in this group, erudition only increases industriousness and desire for more enlightenment (iṣtibṣār), and looking forward to what is beyond knowledge and intellect, that is, to the intuitive experience, exclusively

possessed by the élités of the Truth. They are the only people who would benefit truly from reading this book. My desire to dictate (compose) this book proved to be true (only) because of them, out of fear of being a target of the poet's words:

He who does not serve his people
In his lifetime is useless,
His relatives would not mourn him
When he has died.

May God the most High make them benefit from its study as He wishes, and may He not make it a curse upon me and upon them through His grace and generosity.

Chapter II

"Proving Eternal a parte ante through existence."

You should know that I will not prolong the discussion of the problems, which have thoroughly been discussed and clearly detailed in the books of speculative scholars, rather I will confine myself to mentioning what they neglected and about which their discussion is not quite clear: such as God's knowledge of particulars, the reality of prophecy which is one of those realms which are inconceivable for the intellect to comprehend; and other problems in which the intellect of speculative scholars has strayed, as we shall explain in detail in this book. As for the problems which they truly discussed, I shall not treat them unless when it comes casually, and unintentionally within my discussion; as is the case with the problem that I will mention in this chapter

concerning the affirmation of an Eternal a parte ante. I brought this for an important objective; that is, to compare what I mention in these chapters with what has been mentioned in other speculative works, and to discern whether or not there can be any discussion more concise and authoritative than it. Speculative scholars have thoroughly discussed those problems from the different angles, but certainly most of them went astray; just as one who tries to prove the existence of the Eternal a parte ante by looking at motion; for even if this is a clear-cut way and can really satisfy the objective, it is a long way to go. (Furthermore), by it one needs to establish premises unnecessary for one who follows (uses) the right method. I don't deny the fact that there are many useful things in speculating on the concept of motion,¹ but I would say that one can dispense with it; concerning that problem itself al-Imām al-Ghazālī, may God be pleased with him, mentioned in his book, Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād, some ten pages on the affirmation of the Eternal Being. Upon my life! he (al-Ghazālī) was excused in that because this book of his is written in the methods of works of the theology although his treatment therein is superior to other works of the theologians. Many, apart from al-Ghazālī have written countless pages on these problems as they are known amongst the 'ulamā' but those statements are needed here.

The certain truth concerning the affirmation of the Eternal a parte ante is to prove it through Existence which is most general because if there were not Eternal a parte ante in existence there would have been no existent

thing in existence at all; this is so because existence is definitely divided into what is originated, and what is eternal a parte ante, that is, that whose existence has beginning, and that whose existence has no beginning. If there were no Eternal a parte ante in existence, the contingent would never have come into existence; because it is against the nature of the contingent to make itself exist. For this reason, the one who exists by himself is a necessary being and the necessary being cannot be imagined as having a beginning. From these statements results a demonstrative syllogism called by speculative scholars the conjunctive hypothesis (proposition) so that it may be easily understood by a beginner who is not yet able to perceive the intelligible realities.

It may be said: if there is an existent thing in existence, it would necessarily follow that there must be an Eternal a parte ante in existence; this is an axiomatic premise which is inconceivable to be doubted by anyone. Then we add that existence is absolutely known, and this is the second premise which is certain like the first one. From these two premises follows by necessity the existence of an Eternal a parte ante and this is the way of proving the existence of the Eternal a parte ante through existence. It is inconceivable to expect further explanation beyond this, either briefly or in detail. Following this, you ought to investigate the attributes of this Eternal a parte ante whose existence has been established through necessary demonstrative method, and the nature of that Eternal Being. This is well known, and books abound with it. This treatise of ours cannot bear all that. Every occasion has its special purpose; the

thing in existence at all; this is so because existence is definitely divided into what is originated, and what is eternal a parte ante, that is, that whose existence has beginning, and that whose existence has no beginning. If there were no Eternal a parte ante in existence, the contingent would never have come into existence; because it is against the nature of the contingent to make itself exist. For this reason, the one who exists by himself is a necessary being and the necessary being cannot be imagined as having a beginning. From these statements results a demonstrative syllogism called by speculative scholars the conjunctive hypothesis (proposition) so that it may be easily understood by a beginner who is not yet able to perceive the intelligible realities.

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purpose of this book is to explain something more important, more noble than rational knowledge. For this reason, we do not prolong the book by mentioning it. You should know and be assured that I would not be concerned with mentioning in this book the discussion which speculative scholars have clearly explained, except when I need it (as a basis) for something beyond it (reason).

Chapter III

"The Existence of God and His Attributes according to the
Ṣūfī (al-'Arif)."

The people of penetrating vision which penetrates the veils of suprasensible world, and the spiritual sovereignty have no doubt in the existence of an entity (ma'nā) from which existence has emanated in its ultimate perfection. This entity is expressed outside "the veils" (of spiritual world) and referred to in the Arabic language as Allāh the Highest. By the people of penetrating vision I mean those who perceive the existence of that ma'nā without scientific premises, contrary to speculative scholars. This ma'nā is too elevated and sanctified for the speculation of a speculative scholar to perceive its reality. God is beyond providing the most ambitious people with such possibility for He is most inaccessible by Himself but not to Himself. His Essence and His Self require this inaccessibility to others just as the sun by itself requires in its most luminous glory to be inacces-

sible to the eyes of the bats. "To God alone is the highest ideal and the sun is but merely one of His signs" (16.6). Were it not for His permission and His ever-flowing generosity which necessitates the permission, no human being would have dared to compare Him with anything else. Why not? It is impossible to draw a comparison between Him and others for "there is nothing like Him" (42.11). The sun, in the example we have drawn, does not satisfy my real objective. It does not, by itself, necessitate inaccessibility nor anything else, because its existence with all its attributes are acquired from others. There is no existent thing in existence which deserves real existence except the Almighty One. He is above every perfection perceived by the prophets, and those who are drawn near to Him; not to speak of any defect which those of weak vision imagine of Him. They are those whom God described when He said, "And those who think evil thoughts of God, against them shall be the evil turn of fortune" (48.7).

For the inaccessibility of His Essence to all creatures He says in His glorious book, "Glory be to thy Lord the Lord of honour and power. He is free from what they ascribe to Him" (37.280). For His perfect generosity and His great care about His servants, He freed Himself from all defects in order to bestow grace and affection (kindness) on them and says gloriously, "He begetteth not nor is He begotten" (112.3). "He has taken neither a wife nor a son" (72.3). To the discernment of gnostics, God is beyond all perfections that can be perceived by intelligent people just as He is beyond all kinds of imperfections in the view of ignorant people.

Chapter IV

"The Categories of Existence!"

God the Almighty and the most Exalted is the source of existence in its different genera and species. Existence is divided into general categories under which all existent things are subsumed, such as its division into the eternal a parte ante and the contingent, the perfect and the imperfect, and the one and the many. Among its general categories is its division into an ~~ex~~-istent thing which is aware of itself and these are all the animate beings; and into existent things which have no awareness of themselves, and those are the inanimate beings. Each one of these two ~~categories~~ can be further divided into different categories in many respects. The first category, that is, that which is not aware of itself in respect to its perception, is divided into that which does not perceive anything except that which is compatible with its nature and into that which perceives both the compatible and the incompatible things with its nature. The category which is not aware of itself is divided, for example, when considering its colour, into the white and the black, etc., and it is also divided, when considering something other than it (colour), into other divisions: the explanation of this would be lengthy, and it does not in any case concern us here. So we would hence ignore it, and concentrate on our ultimate objective and say: there are some existent beings which, when one considers their relation to the category which perceives things both compatible and incompatible with its nature, one will find

divided, according to that relation only, into good and evil. Anything which is compatible with the faculty of perception is good in relation to it, as long as its perception is compatible with it; but if this relation between the two is changed and its perception becomes incompatible with it (the faculty of perception) and rather harms it, it will be an evil in relation to it. Therefore, it is possible that one and the same thing can be both good and bad in relation to two perceiving agents. How true then is the statement: "The Misfortune for some people may turn out to be fortune for others."

Chapter V

"The Reason for the multiplicity of God's Attributes."

You should know that God who is the source of all existent things in their different categories has many names in relation to those categories, and these names are almost innumerable if one were to count them. With regard to His relation to every existent thing which emanates from Him, God has a name.

What He calls Himself in His Book (the Qur'ān) and through the tongue of His Prophets and by which He is called by creatures, is limited. These statements may need some further explanation and exposition for the weak-minded people. I would break down the fence of objection

in this and say: if we were to consider the Essence of God Almighty, Most Exalted, in as much as it is the source of the category of those existent things which perceive both what is and what is not compatible with their nature; and if we are to consider, along with this, the relation of that category of existent things to what is compatible and what is not compatible¹ there would result two names which are the harmful and the useful, that is, the one who causes harm and the one who causes good; the inanimate neither suffers nor benefits from anything as far as perception goes. Nevertheless it is possible for its form to be annihilated by something else and that thing would in this case be what causes harm to its form. However, in the real and the original usage of the terms "useful" and "harmful" they are not applied except to that which has the faculty of perception. As for this application to other than this (that which has faculty of perception) in the general linguistic usage, it is merely metaphorical habit of transmission. The terms which are habitually transmitted (metaphorically) are numerous and too well known to need explanation. The terms do not count much after the concepts have been made clear and obvious.

Chapter VI

"The Difference between God's names and His Attributes."

Perhaps you would say that harmful and useful are two attributes; so, how can you say that they are two names? Is it possible for us to say that God's attributes are His names or is there any difference between them? You should know that when we think in terms of reality, we

should realize that the difference between a name and an attribute is obvious; they differ in concept. The name is a term laid down by philologists (ahl al-istilāh), to indicate what is named without considering an attribute separate from it; as for the attribute it is contrary to this. In the same manner the name of stone indicates something named by it without considering the solidness or the softness of that thing itself; because solidness and softness are two attributes only applicable when we think of two specific things in stone and in other things. This is a plain truth when we think in terms of reason; but when we think in terms of divine law (al-sharʿ) we would realize that God has said: "The most Beautiful Names belong to Him" (7.179). For that reason the Benignant (al-Laṭīf), the All-wise (al-Hakīm), the Compassionate (al-Rahmān), the Merciful (al-Rahīm) are classified under those names. It appears that none of His names indicates His reality without considering some of His attributes except Allāh; this name as applied to Him is equivalent to proper names applied to others.

Chapter VII

"The term "Allāh" is a proper name for
the Necessary Being".

If you carefully consider the problem you will realize that all that God has applied to describe Himself or that has been applied by other to describe Him is by virtue of His relation to some of the existent things or to all of them. More explanation of this problem will

come later. It is very likely that the term "Allāh" which is a proper name to Him is set forth as an indication of the existent Being at whom culminates the vision of a traveller (mystic), just as the one who travels through the path of the sensible existence to the intellectual existence; then his journey has ended where the gates of the spiritual world (al-malakūt) have been opened to him; and when his penetration into the oceans of the spiritual world has ended, is granted the pearl of the "Unity" (al-tawhīd); thus he laid down that proper name as an indication to the "Pearl," not considering its relation to any being which is issued from it, but considering it per se in as much as he saw it existent. As for those who call that "Pearl" eternal a parte ante, they call it such because of its contrariety to all the essences in their need for a cause; likewise, if you consider the names "the Living," "the Truth" you would know that the one who set them forth did so when considering the death and annihilation of others. As for the name which is equivalent to the proper name for Him you never find this in it; however, this may even be used arbitrarily, and be subjected to all sorts of cold technical derivations which grammarians and morphologists usually mention in their books. To occupy myself with the explanation of various defects in such derivation is a waste of time which is very valuable in matters like this; nor is it in the capacity of this gleam to bear such explanation, for its brevity forbids the explanation of the like of such matters.

Chapter VIII

"The Definition of the Necessary, Impossible and Possible Beings."

All possible things are made necessary by the Eternal a parte ante; this is the manner in which God conducts matters in the material world (al-mulk) and in the spiritual world (al-malakūt). "No change will you then find in the practice (approved) of God" (33.62). All things that are not yet in existence are to be considered impossible to exist, and the impossibility does not lie in themselves but in another factor. Impossibility is that which is not an object of power, for as long as a thing is not an object of power the sempiternal power will not cause it to exist. The explanation of this is that the cause for the existence of the existent things is God the Almighty, and that He exists. Nothing prevents the existence of an effect (musabbab) when the cause (sabab) exists, except the absence of the condition; because the existence of a conditioned thing in the absence of the condition is impossible. Whenever the conditions of the possible thing exist, the sempiternal power will necessarily necessitate its existence. Nothing is possible to exist so long as it lacks the condition; if this is realized you should know that every existent thing is necessary either by itself or by other than itself. Thus, the boundaries of the necessary and the impossible beings are linked together without any barrier separating them. The possibility is only a boundary that separates them, but it has no reality whatsoever, just like an imaginary point

which is supposed to exist in a straight line and like the line that separates the past from the future. The end of the boundaries of the past is linked with the beginning of the boundaries of the future. As for the limit which separates them, it has no reality except in the imagination; for, if you assume an imaginary point in the line of time which is divided into the past and the future you will find that there is nothing separating the past from the future which can be considered as a real demarcation line. It is merely an assumed point in the imagination.¹

Chapter IX

"The Purpose of Creation (al-Ijād)."

If it occurs to your mind to ask why God Almighty creates things and if you think that He creates for a purpose which affects Him this will be very absurd; also if you think that God creates things without any purpose whatsoever except by sheer nature this too will be absurd. God should not be characterised in this manner.

You should know that most scholars have been perplexed by this question. It is the same idea that occurred to the prophet David (Dāwūd), peace be upon him, when he said: "Oh Lord, why did you create things?" God said to him, "I was a hidden treasure, then I wanted to be known". So the idea which necessitates the emanation of creatures from Him is that which He metaphorically expressed in His

word: "I wanted to be known." It is inconceivable for anyone to perceive that concept except the gnostics (al-'Arifūn). As for the intellect the farthest it can go (with regard to this matter) is that it can only prove His existence through existent things, and that is after it has realized that God knows the particulars so much so that it (the intellect) will not doubt it. When the reason realizes that all existent things depend on Him, and when it further realizes His knowledge of the particulars it will become clear to it that the creation (al-ījād) by the Necessary Being and His knowledge of this creation are necessary attributes for His Essence; just as being eternal, for example, is a necessary attribute for it (that is, His Essence). It is impossible for the Necessary Being to be non-eternal (a parte ante); it is also impossible for Him not to be the source of the creation, thus, the statement of the one who said: "Why is He the source of existence" is like his statement, "Why is He eternal (a parte ante)?". The answer to this is that if He were not eternal a parte ante, He would not have been a Necessary Being and if He were not the source of existence He would also not be a Necessary Being. He who realizes the dependence of existence upon Him will inevitably say: the creation is one of His attributes; and thus say: if this attribute is necessary for God, the question of "why is He described by it" will be a sheer folly. It is like the question: "why is He eternal a parte ante?" If this attribute were not necessary for Him, then it would have been an accidental attribute, outside His Essence. The accident needs a cause, whereas the Necessary Being by virtue of His Essence is above all needs for anything else, otherwise He would not be necessary.

Chapter X

"The limit of the ascension of the intellect regarding the knowledge of God".

Every existent thing, which is contingent is an object of power; because if it were not an object of power it would not exist.¹ The source of existence then is the power. Every existent thing which is an object of power is an object of will, for if it were not, it would not have existed. The source of existence then is the will. Every existent thing which is an object of will has a certain relation to the Necessary Being and He has His face (wajh) in every existent thing. Every existent thing is within the knowledge (ḥādir) of the Necessary Being and the Necessary Being is aware of every existent thing; that is, any thing which is not within the knowledge of the Necessary Being is non-existent, for He has no face to it. Had it not been for this face of the self-subsisting Being no existent thing would have existed in any manner. As one may say in the ordinary understanding: Had it not been for the face of the sun which is the sustainer of rays that are scattered over the Earth, these rays would never have existed. Since the Necessary Being has face in everything He will necessarily know every mote in existence. This is the limit of the intellect in its ascension; it affirms for the Necessary Being every thing it considers necessary to Him by demonstrating His existence through the existent things and their attributes, as you see it prove His eternity, His power, His knowledge and His will through

the existent things and their contingency, but nothing beyond this will be possible for the intellect to perceive.

Chapter XI

"God's knowledge is infinite".

The relation of all things in existence to the vastness of the sempiternal knowledge is like the relation of nothing to something infinite. Through their insights the gnostics truly understand this statement to such an extent that they can not doubt it; just as the intelligent people realize that the whole is greater than the part, and that the existence of the simple unit (al-mufrad) precedes the existence of the composite (al-murakkab). This realization is certain to the rational people; there is not the least doubt about it. However, animals are deprived of this realization in spite of its clarity to rational people; for animals are deprived of the sense of such realization. In the same manner those rational people who restrict themselves within the scope of the intellect beyond which they cannot proceed, are also deprived of the understanding of our statement that the relation of all beings to God's knowledge is like the relation of nothing to something infinite; thus, they become perplexed and lost in their attempt to understand how God knows the particulars, and think that any change in these particulars will necessitate a change in His knowledge of them.¹

Chapter XII

"God's Knowledge of Particulars".

Among the wonders of the verses of the Qur'ān is God's word: "Verily We shall recount their story with knowledge, for We were never absent at any time or place" (7.7). This implies that everything is known to Him (hādirūn lahu) and that He is present with everything; thus nothing slips out of His knowledge. As for His words "He encompasses everything in His knowledge" (20.98), the use of the term "encompassion" is the most wonderful thing: its explanation is that all existent things are acquired through His knowledge, and His knowledge encompasses every thing, as He said: "He embraces everything in His knowledge" (65.12).

In reality God, glory and might be to Him, is the multiplicity (al-kathrah) and the totality (al-kull), every thing other than Him is particular and part, nay, everything other than God is neither a single nor a part except through the aspect (al-wajh) which reflects His totality and His multiplicity. Take an example for this ambiguous statement itself, as an evidence of your blindness; you should know that despite the fact that the sun is one thing the rays that emanate from it are multiple; thus the truth is to say that it is the sun which is multiple, but its rays are particulars. If knowledge acquired from the existence of a known thing is called knowledge (that is, human knowledge) why then should the Divine [~]Attribute which is the source of all existent things not be called knowledge? Nay, the truth is not

to apply the word "knowledge" except with regard to it (that is, God's attribute). If it is applied to anything else it is merely a metaphor, a far-reaching relaxation in the usage of word and sheer equivocality (al-ish-tirāk) in so far as the reality is concerned for the gnostic. The 'ulamā' would even judge that the application of the term knowledge to both the knowledge of God and that of His creatures is by way of similarity.

The statement of the one who says that God does not know particulars - God is totally free from and entirely above their statement - implies that he has reached this conclusion through his belief to have seen these particulars fall into the past or into the future and so he thought that their change would necessitate that the knowledge of them be changed. This is craziness according to the people of real knowledge (sūfi), because time is a part of existent things, for it is the measure of motion, and motion is specific attribute of bodies. It is known that the bodies are the lowest category that exists in the sempiternal knowledge. All existent things, the noble ones and the low ones of the categories, are acquired from it (divine knowledge); whereas the existence of the sempiternal knowledge is not dependent on the existence of anything; rather the existence of everything depends on His existence. If time is a part of existent things, as already explained, how will it be possible to say that any change which occurs to some existent things would necessitate a change in His knowledge? This can only be true if His knowledge were dependent on the existent things as it is the case with creatures' knowledge.

Since His knowledge is not such why should the change which occurs to existent things therefore necessitate a change in His knowledge which comprehends them (the existent things)?¹

Chapter XIII

"Comparing God's knowledge with sunshine"

He who thinks that the change of rays due to the existence of a veil that prevents the Earth's ability to receive them, such as cloud for instance, would necessitate a change of the attributes which is the source of the rays, he has grossly gone astray. Upon my life, it is possible for the sun to change, and consequently the rays would change; but our supposition here is that the change of the rays is caused by a veil which prevents the Earth from receiving the light of the sun; I do not mean which prevents the emanation of the sun since the sun with its attributes remains the same; nothing changes in it, due to this veil, rather it is the veils which prevent the Earth from receiving the emanation of the sunlight.

Chapter XIV

"Continuation of the preceding chapter".

You should know that the sun in itself is perfect in the glory of its illumination; it does not need anything to acquire any perfection. He who thinks that when the sun faces a body with its rays focussed on it, and

its effect reaches it, this would be perfection with regards to it, he is gravely mistaken, for the perfection of anything depends on its being exposed to the sun, so that it could acquire a certain share of its perfect illumination. The supposition that the sun's facing of anything is a perfection to it is completely wrong. This is an obvious example in explaining our objective insofar as superficial consideration is concerned; for the people of intellect, it is the heart of reality and the utmost perfection.

However, these terms are too far to let their meanings be revealed to the insight of reason; rather, any comprehension of them lies in the stage beyond the intellect. If you have any doubt in your heart about it, your fervent desire would not be satisfied even if you are overflowed by rational knowledge at once, just as the desire of a hungry person cannot be satisfied by water, nor can the desire of a thirsty man be met by a loaf of bread; likewise, the desire of a gnostic concerning the stage which lies beyond the intellect cannot be pacified by rational knowledge.

Chapter XV

"God's Knowledge of Particulars".

The relation of all existing things to God is one and the same; present, past and future times have equal relation to Him. When the existing things are rationally considered, they will be seen in levels; some precede others, just as a unit precedes composites, but when

they are referred and related to Him correctly, their relation to Him becomes equal. He is indeed vast: "All things He comprehends in His knowledge" (20.98). That is to say, had it not been for His knowledge for their existence they would never have existed; those in existence, and those which are not in existence are equally comprehended by His comprehensive knowledge which the understanding of creatures is incapable of comprehending and which annihilates their intellects even before they grasp its reality and which would destroy their power before they reach even one of its signs; because His knowledge is not like that of the creatures at all. In the same manner the essence of the sun is in no way similar to its rays, a tangible example within which the understanding of common people is limited. Why should it not be that while His sempiternal knowledge was in existence before the existence of time and all existent things as they are now existing? Our weak intellects cannot perceive His knowledge of the particulars as it ought to be; rather they (our weak intellects) perceive their inability to perceive His knowledge, just as imagination perceives its inability to perceive the reality of an existent thing which is neither inside nor outside the world, nor is it connected or separated from it.

The reality of the sempiternal knowledge cannot be explained through knowledge except by this expression which is laid down for a concept other than the concept for which the expression is meant here. For this reason both intellect and perception are so much confused in perceiving it. He whose intellect, understanding and knowledge fall short in perceiving it (His knowledge)

should recognize the incompetence of his power and his ability, he should constantly try to understand it; perhaps a new door of it might be opened to him. He should also seek assistance from God Almighty to succeed in acquiring something which may purify his heart from the veils which bar him from the real perception. Never should you hasten to deny this without knowing it intuitively; thus, this is the belief of some people who, for many years, hold the same belief concerning the eternal knowledge, which has been held by all those who went astray, until God guided them by His light, through His grace and His generosity, not by any right for them or any obligation on Him. May God Almighty increase their knowledge, in realizing the inability of their intellect to perceive Divine matters. He who desires to comprehend by his intellect and his knowledge the reality of a knowledge that existed prior to the universe and even before (time), and which is the cause of the existence of all existing things and which comprehends everything to an extent that no comprehension beyond it can be conceivable, had sought the egg of a vulture (an impossibility), desired to reach Capella and dislocated himself from the nature of intellect. Such people are better to be described as insane by the virtuous people. In many degrees, our intellects are more incapable of perceiving the sempiternal knowledge than an ant or even an inanimate object is in comprehending our knowledge.

The relation of His knowledge to ours is like the relation of His power to our power; just as it is impossible for our power to create something from nothingness,

It is not impossible for His sempiternal power because He is the originator of ^{the}Heavens and the Earth, that is, He is the one who created them and produced them from nothingness. It is also impossible for our knowledge to comprehend that a known thing can be changed without necessitating any change in our knowledge of it because our knowledge is acquired from known things; this is not impossible to the knowledge of God on which the existence of all existent things is based. Indeed, when the intellect perceives at the first instance a disparity between the two powers and does not perceive any disparity between the two kinds of knowledge, it becomes lost in its judgment; thus it falls into those errors and is trapped in these snares. God the Highest is beyond the intellect just as He comprehends it. Then how could it be imagined that the intellect would comprehend Him and His attributes? The comprehension of a particular for the whole is too remote. The intellect is one of the atoms of existence which resulted from Him. We have already mentioned that all existent things do not have any relation to the vastness of the sempiternal knowledge, how would it befit the intellect to desire to comprehend it? He whose understanding falls short of realizing this inability because of his own ignorance, and his little preparation to realize his inability, has no cause for his defect other than the narrowness of the bladder of his intellect. "I only have to dig the rhymes from their sources; but I am not responsible if a cow does not understand (them)". Praise be to the One who has sent Muḥammad, (may God bless him and bestow peace upon him), to all creatures, and who pronounced through his tongue and said: "Whichever way ye

turn the face of God is there. Verily, God is unrestricted, all knowing." (2.115) If there were nothing in the Qur'ān except this verse, it would be sufficient evidence to prove the ignorance of those who disbelieve and deny that sempiternal knowledge comprehends all particulars. Why should it not be, when there is no consonant in the Qur'ān which is not a proof of the blindness of these people. This is because He mentions in that verse the attribute of expansiveness (al-wāsi') together with the mention of all knowing, and links that with the saying, "Whichever way ye turn the face of God is there." This is a subtle, clear-cut indication that every existing thing has some sort of relation to His face. Had it not been for that relation, that thing itself would never have existed. He knows things because His face faces them. This is the meaning of His knowledge of particulars.

Chapter XVI

"Belief in sempiternal knowledge is dependent on the stage beyond intellect".

As long as you wish to believe in the reality of sempiternal knowledge through premises, you are still beating on a cold iron. The real belief in it is indeed dependent on the appearance of a light in the heart (al-bāṭin) by which your heart would be delighted and over which your bladder (hawṣalah) would be extended. Through this light, you would realize that God's knowledge is not similar to that of the creatures. Thereat, your desire

for the belief obtained through speculative science would have ceased and you would certainly be assured that unless this light appears in your heart, it would be inconceivable for you to really believe in the attribute of knowledge and all the other sempiternal attributes. The true belief is to give up, right away, any attempt to know the sempiternal attributes and to abandon the desire for such knowledge. Unless one has become such, one should not hope to discover the reality of belief (īmān). This light already referred to would appear in man's heart with the appearance of the stage which is beyond the intellect. You should never try to dismiss the existence of that, because beyond the intellect there are many stages, and no one knows their number except God. It is very rare to perceive in this stage any comprehension for which one needs to deduce some premises. Verily, a seeing man does not need any deduction to comprehend visible things; it is only the blind man who cannot comprehend them, except through a deductive method, as it would be the case if he proved the existence of a visible thing by touching. That which is beyond existence, namely, the reality of color, is impossible to perceive because the path of the deductive method to it is blocked.

Chapter XVII

"The Function of Reason and Intuition".

The intellect is primarily created to perceive an a priori knowledge for which one does not need to use premises. As for its comprehension of the obscure speculative problems through a deductive method, and the use of

premises, it (the intellect) seems to exceed its original nature (characteristics). This is so, just as the sense of touch is primarily created to perceive tangible things on the grounds that they are objects of touch. If a blind man used it to prove the existence of what is to be comprehended by the perceptive power, this would be something beyond its nature, that is to say, beyond the nature of the sense of touch. Likewise, writing is peculiar to the hand; if an amputee writes with his leg, his action would be considered something beyond its nature because the sempiternal power did not create the leg for writing purposes. It serves another purpose. From this, one should know that the comprehension of ambiguous rational knowledge happens in a stage beyond reason. To comprehend them one can do without premises. The relation of this stage to ambiguous knowledge is like the relation of intellect to necessary truth.

Chapter XVIII

"Intuition (al-baṣīrah) is a power (sense) which is like sight or instinct (inspiration) in poetry".

"Perhaps one would say that this is very difficult to comprehend and would need further explanation from you." You should know that the relation between this stage (the stage of intuition) and its own understanding is like the relation between the sense of taste in poetry and the realization of the difference between metrical poetry and unmetrical poetry (well-composed poetry

and badly composed poetry), that sense does not need any premise in order to comprehend the meter of poetry. Likewise the stage which is beyond reason does not need any premise in realizing the distinction between truth and falsity, concerning ambiguous matters, just as a person who searches into things by means of reason needs this premise because of his defect. In order to perceive the existence of visible things, a blind man also needs to move to them by means of his feet and then he can realize their existence through the sense of touch. Similarly, anyone who has no taste for poetry needs the premises of prosody (metrics) by which he can appreciate metrical and unmetrical poetry.

Chapter XIX

"Through an Axiom al-Baṣīrah comprehends the absolute few and the absolute many (al-qalīl al-muṭlaq wa al-kathīr al-muṭlaq)".

One must realize that the intellect has a way of perceiving the concept of the absolute few and that of the absolute many; they are two additional attributes of number; it has a way of realizing that the absolute few which is the smallest unit in the numbers is "two"; but it has no way of comprehending the absolute many which exceeds all numbers. One should realize that the relation of the absolute many, in terms of understanding, to sempiternal knowledge, is like the relation of the absolute few to it (sempiternal knowledge); there is no difference in God's knowledge between understanding the absolute many and the absolute few. It is impossible for the intellect to perceive how sempiternal knowledge

comprehends this; rather, the understanding of this depends on the opening of a vision in man's inner sight, (a quality) exclusively possessed by the gnostics (al-'Arifūn), and then the reality of the stage which is beyond the intellect would be obvious to it (the intellect). The relation of the intellect to this vision is like the relation of rays to the sun. The inability of the intellect to perceive the understanding of the properties of this vision is similar to the inability of the imagination to perceive the understanding of the intellect. He who accidentally discovers in himself, a necessary belief which is beyond doubt, that the absolute many in the knowledge of God is like the absolute few without any difference or disparity, should be certain that the vision of al-ma'-rifah is opened in his heart, and that it (the vision) will become an intimate source for the likes of this wisdom. One should be very careful not to let an eye-sore enter into it (that is, the vision already referred to). An incident which could cause blear-eye and eye-sore often befalls it; on the whole, it would negate it from being capable of comprehending what is designated to it. One must needs cite an example of this in the word of God: "Their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it lighted all around him, God took away their light and left them in utter darkness, so they could not see" (2.17). One should realize that the relation of those events to the vision of ma'rifah is similar to the events which affected the Earth and neutralised its acceptance of the emanation of the light of the sun.

Chapter XX

"The difference between the understanding of a scholar and that of a gnostic concerning the existence of God."

Among the characteristics of the stage which is beyond reason is that when one perceives the existence of God, the Highest, a great love and real desire for Him which is inexpressible will be instilled in him. However the intellect also enjoys the perception of the existence of God, but this is not an enjoyment of the perception of His Beauty; nay, it is an enjoyment of it (only)ⁱⁿ as far as He is known, just as one enjoys all knowledge such as mathematics, medicine, and other branches of knowledge. Upon my life, I do not deny the disparity in enjoyment between the perception of God and the understanding of any mathematical problem; but it is like the disparity that one notices in all knowledge with regards to their nobility and their baseness. Moreover, it is a fact that some of them are by nature superior to others. When the intellect enjoys the perception of the existence of God as something that can be understood, it is like an outward sight when it enjoys the understanding of a nice object of smell, insofar as it is an object of sight with a beautiful colour; verily, that enjoyment is far from the enjoyment of the sense of the smell of its perfume when it perceives it. Just as the perception of the seeing-man of the existence of musk by the sense of sight, and his enjoyment of the perception of its colour will neither cause great desire nor much demand for musk, as it is the case with the one who perceives it by the sense of smell; it is the same also to one who perceives the

existence of God by means of the rational method; the desire instilled in the gnostic would not be instilled in him; rather, the intellect can only enjoy perceiving Him insofar as He is only an object of knowledge.

Chapter XXI

"The gnostic's familiarity with
the beauty of Divine Presence".

When the vision of al-ma'rifah is open to the follower of the spiritual path (al-sālik), the more perfect and prepared he is to understand, the more the Divine subtle matters overflow on him; and the more they overflow on him, the more familiar he becomes with the spiritual world; the more intimate he is to the grace of God, the more he loves the beauty of the sempiternal presence; thus, his intimacy with this world would decrease gradually; and in the same manner, his familiarity with the Divine world increases. Now you may compare this intimacy with the familiarity with rational knowledge, which happens to a speculative scholar, but that is a false and absurd opinion, a deplorable mistake. I borrow here the term "familiarity" and others, namely, love, beauty and so on, by necessity. Thus, their resemblance in different meanings should never delude a person, lest he go astray without being aware of it, and be satisfied, through their terms (musammayatihā) with falsities which you imagine for them by your weak intellect.

Chapter XXII

"Belief in the stage of al-ma'arifah, sainthood and prophecy".

He who is not endowed with any characteristics of that stage, his intellect will not believe in the existence of it through premises, and the belief in the prophecy will almost be impossible for him because prophecy is a stage beyond the intellect, and also beyond the stage already referred to. He who does not believe in that is yet to believe in prophecy. What do you think of the one who disbelieves in the stage of sainthood which appears after (the stage of) the intellect and which precedes the stage of prophecy?

If such a man outwardly believes or confesses in his heart that he believes in the reality of prophecy he is wrong; and in this belief of his he is like a blind man who maintains that he believes in the existence of colour and the perception of its reality when he perceives the existence of a coloured object through the sense of touch. How unfounded this is, for it is far from the perception of the reality of the colour.

Chapter XXIII

"Belief in Prophecy is a belief in suprasensible world".

To the intellect belief in prophecy is the belief in the suprasensible world; if the intellect likens this

suprasensible world to anything present to its perception it will be very far from the truth. If one acquires such a belief one should notice that he is a believer in prophecy; on the other hand, if he does not, he is prohibited from eating, drinking and sleeping, except when it is necessary, until he has acquired this belief. If one accepts this advice one will succeed, but if one neglects it he will be neglected. "Whosoever striveth hard does so for his own advantage, verily Allāh is far from the need of all creatures (the worlds)" (29.5). A person like this receives upon the appearance of the forehead of the angel in charge of death, His words "But there would appear to them from Allāh what they never reckon with" (39.47).

Chapter XXIV

"The way to strengthen the belief in Prophecy".

Perhaps one would say: what is the way that an intelligent man has to follow in order to be able to believe in prophecy? To such a person the answer would be: the way is the way of the one who has no taste for poetry, he should have social intercourse with the people of taste until he achieves his objective. There are many who do not have the taste for poetry who do not realize any difference between poetry and prose, yet they believe in the existence of the power of appreciation of poetry in people other than themselves; such people aim at realizing the difference; that is because of their frequent social intercourse with people who are not deprived of that power; thus they became believers in suprasensible world with very certain belief.

Chapter XXV

"The Attributes of God from the point of view of reason and intuition".

The attributes of God are divided into what can be perceived by looking at some existent things and by considering their being characterized with special attributes, such as the wise (al-Hakīm), the maker (al-Sāni'), and the creator (al-Khāliq); these attributes are conceivable to the intellect to perceive. ~~As for~~ those attributes which have no connection whatsoever with any existent thing; the mental perception of them and their reality depends entirely on the appearance of a stage beyond reason; such as the attribute of Majesty (al-Kibriyā'), Greatness (al-'Azamah), Beauty (al-Jamāl), and Splendour (al-Bahā'). Whatever the intellect perceives of the meanings of these terms is far from their reality. One must guard against being deluded by the outward appearance of things because human nature is naturally prone to be adorned with all kinds of perfection while in reality is without it; it does not recognise its inability, rather it indulges in what is permissible and what is not permissible to it. It jostles (yuzāhim) ~~for~~ what it can perceive (realize) and what it cannot perceive, like the jostling of imagination in the understanding of reason; this is a piece of evidence convincing enough to make one doubtful of human nature; if it claims that reason can perceive the sempiternal Beauty, one should say to it that the beautiful thing is abandoned for most beautiful things in general, how is it that one does not place less

beautiful things below Him (the most beautiful) despite the fact that the most beautiful thing in relation to His beauty is the ugliest thing? Then, nature would resort to some hallucinations, the mention of which I find my time too precious to be wasted on, or in explaining the kind of defects prevailing in each of them. He who is assisted by this power (al-dawlah) and has been given some of the reality of the stage already indicated until he perceives a degree of the sempiternal Beauty which is made possible for him to perceive, this degree would be a sufficient witness of the required objective (of his).

Chapter XXVI

"Intuition does perceive the conditions of Love".

Love is one of the characteristics of this stage (the stage which is beyond the intellect). He who witnesses the symptoms (ahwāl) of love (al-'Ishq) will in no way doubt that the intellect is isolated from understanding these symptoms because a lover has no means of communicating the concept of love in which he is involved to the understanding of an intelligent man who has not experienced love so that he is in the position of a lover who has experienced love. This is the case of intellect in all aspects of emotion, namely, anger, happiness, fear and shyness. The intellect perceives knowledge but it has no means of perceiving these emotions. Indeed, it can perceive their existence and judge each one of them differently, but as far as the reality of al-'Ishq and all emotions are concerned, the intellect does not per-

ceive them through premises as it perceives rational understanding when it receives their premises from others, to the extent that it equates them with this understanding.

Chapter XXVII

"The Reality of Love".

Love is (always) followed by a search for the beloved; and the real search is to get the attention of the seeker entirely focused on the objective; then the demand and the experience will be intertwined.¹ One should consider the reality of this demand by citing the example of the attraction of iron to a magnet; if the iron is pure it would be entirely attracted to the magnet, and there will be no disruption in its demand (its being attracted), but if the iron is mixed with some gold or silver or other metals, that will necessarily decrease the perfection of its attraction (kamāl al-injīdhāb). When it is not mixed with anything else, the real demand becomes necessary; then the experience of mind, that is to say, the contact with the magnet, becomes necessary. This is what we mean when we say, "the demand and the experience of mind become intertwined". However, the iron may be hindered from being attracted to the magnet by an external obstacle; nonetheless, this will not degrade the perfectness of the demand; rather, degradation comes only when there is a mixture of gold or plaster or other things which have been mixed with ^{it in} its source. The external obstacle may not have a great effect in disrupting the course of the demand, for example, the attraction of the iron to the

magnet. If nothing which does not turn its face towards the beloved is mixed with the essence of the lover, the lover with all his entirety will respond to Divine call (al-Ihrām) towards his desired objective, which is the direction of the beloved; there, the seeker will become one of the seeking novices; thus the reality of the following statements of God, the Highest, will be revealed to him; "When his Lord said to him, surrender: he said, I surrender myself to the Lord of all Beings" (2.125); "Verily the religion in God's sight is Islām" (3.19); "God's original upon which He originated mankind there is no changing God's creation. That is the right religion; but most men know it not" (30.29); "He has imposed no difficulties on you in religion" (22.78); "Is it not to God that sincere obedience belongs?" (39.3); "There is no compulsion in religion. Rectitude has become clear from error; so whosoever disbelieves in idols and believes in God has grasped the most trust-worthy hand-hold that never breaks" (2.256); and "Yet he has not assaulted the steep; and what shall teach thee what is the steep? The freeing of a slave" (90.11-13).

The difference between what hinders a lover from inside which is like gold when it is mixed with iron, and what hinders him from outside which in relation to him is like ^acompelling hand which prevents the iron from being attracted is almost impossible to comprehend, except by the one who has a very strong hold (well established foot) in that affair. Be careful and be careful, you who rigidly stick to your knowledge and who are deluded by your intellect, not to look at this chapter and the likes of it with a scorning eye, and wipe your

moustache with them, thinking that this is one of the perplexities uttered by some stupid heretics, who have gone astray. He has not arrived at anything of these meanings by experience; he is one of those about whom the Qur'ān says: "Since they are not guided by it certainly they will say this is an old falsehood" (46.11); and "Nay they charge with falsehood that whose knowledge they cannot encompass, and whose interpretation has not yet come to them" (10.39). This is your share of the advice that I ought to provide you with. As for the 'ārifūn your belief and your disbelief are equal to them; to them the position of your knowledge on which you base your views is like the position of weaving and the art of copping with regards to the authoritative 'Ulamā'. What is wrong with the scholars whose knowledge encompasses the reality of knowledge, if they do not know the art of weaving and that of copping?

Chapter XXVIII

"The relation of the limitation of Reason
in the region of both Intellect and Intuition".

The greater a man's attainment of this stage (the stage beyond the intellect) is, the more aware his intellect is of its inability to understand the reality of the First (al-Awwal) and of His Attributes. The last scope of the conceivable understanding appears when the intellect realizes its inability to perceive many existent things which appear at the stage beyond the intellect. The limit of the stage of reason is linked to the initial stage beyond reason, just as the limit of the

stage of discretion is linked to the initial stage of the intellect. If a scholar is perfect in his knowledge, he must needs be able to discover that he is certainly incapable of comprehending the sempiternal reality; but he only realizes this after he has mastered many premises known to the speculative scholars. Thereafter, there will be a wide gap and a great difference between the intellect's realization of the inability of deductive method and the mystic's realization of that inability; that is to say that the intellect is incapable of comprehending the understanding of the mystic. The intellect's realization of its inability is almost like the inability of imagination with regards to the realization of the understanding of the intellect; by deductive methods, imagination realizes its inability to understand ambiguous things which are conceivable.

However, the intellect realizes the inability of imagination to perceive its understanding without any premises. Imagination reaches its climax when it recognises its inability to perceive rational knowledge established by reason through the use of correct premises; likewise when an intelligent man realizes the inability of the intellect to perceive the understanding of the mystics, he has then reached the limit of the intellect and perceived the utmost of what is perceptible by reason; then he has certainly reached his objective. At this point the traveller (sālik) has completed the first stage of his journey to Gnosis (ma'rifah).

Chapter XXIX

"Comparison between the realization of Intellect and Intuition of their limitation".

The intellect is necessarily incapable of realizing its real inability of perceiving the understanding of a mystic just as imagination is necessarily incapable of realizing the reality of its inability to perceive conceivable things. It is the intellect which perceives the real inability that is characteristic of the imagination in perceiving conceivable things. If the intellect is unable to realize its real inability how can one doubt our statement that it is unable to perceive the reality of the Truth (al-Haqq), and that of His knowledge which is the source of existence? Thus the disparity between intellects concerning this matter is due to the disparity in their aptitude to realize this inability. The inability (limitation) which Muḥammad - may God bless him and bestow peace upon him - recognised is not like the limitation recognised by Abū Bakr - may God be pleased with him; moreover, there is a great disparity in the recognition of the inability to recognise the limitation. Perhaps when the soul is totally incapable of perceiving the completeness of the limitation, it will realize its limitation by means of Gnosis and not through premises. Perhaps the statement of the most truthful man that "Inability to realize understanding is understanding"¹ was in reference to something like this. Perhaps the Gnosis referred to in the statement of mystics, "He who knows God his tongue would be heavy" is close in meaning to what is indicated here.²

Chapter XXX**"The Problem of Essence and Attributes".**

This discussion has led me to exceed the limits of rational thought; and many a man will almost be harmed by hearing what I indulged in; there are some who realize this and do not deny it. It is better for me now to return to the desired objective and say: How badly in need you are to be able to complete the hearing of the idea which we have so far been discussing concerning Attributes, and to prove, through the divisions of existence, the classifications of the attributes which are not really the essence itself nor are they other than it, as stated and agreed upon by all truthful people. However such judgement is denied by the feeble-minded.

Chapter XXXI**"Continuation of the problem of Essence and Attributes".**

Perhaps you will say that it is obviously impossible to the primary reason to conceive that a thing is neither an essence of something itself nor other than it; and you should explain further so that some fervent thirst may be quenched. You should know that when one makes a statement to the effect that one thing, for example, is not the essence of another thing itself nor other than it in one aspect, the statement will be impossible because no rational being will believe this, but if there exist two considerations concerning it, this would not be

impossible. Just as it is definitely impossible that a thing should neither be non-existent nor existent at the same time the impossibility here is very obvious to the intellect; but it is apparently true when one considers the two aspects with regards to its meaning and when it is applied according to two different meanings. The explanation of this is that a thing may exist under one aspect and may not under the other. This is the case with every existent thing except the existent Being whose existence depends on His own essence. If one thinks of the essence of any possible being without considering the sustenance of the Necessary Being for it, one will realize that it (the possible thing) is non-existent insofar as its own essence is concerned. However, when one looks at a possible being and considers it in terms of the aspect which reflects the sustenance of the Necessary Being for it one will realize that it is an existent being. The Holy Qur'ān, the eternal speech, referred to such a thing when it said: "All that is on earth will perish, but the face of thy Lord will abide forever, full of Majesty, Beauty and Honour" (26.27). Our attention is here drawn to something like that by a statement of the Prophet when he said:

The most truthful verse (bayt) composed
by Arabs is that of Labīd;
Verily everything other than God is
worthless, and every fortune will undoubtedly
perish.

Chapter XXXII

"The problem of the multiplicity of the
Attributes and the Unity of the Essence".

Attributes are the Essence itself if one views them from an angle which is proximate to (which reflects) the essence. According to this there will in no way be any difference between them. However they are the essence if one views them from an angle which is proximate to existence which is divided into numerous parts. According to this the attributes are different and many. Here is a clear example of this, but perhaps your soul may not be convinced except after listening to it; it is this example which totally breaks the barrier of the rejection of what we are discussing and which eradicates the denial of the pedantics. You should know that the number "ten" has in itself an understood concept which is indivisible and which is referred to by the term "ten" (al-'asharah). However, if its relation to the number "five" is considered it would be referred to by the term "double" (al-di'f), and if its relation to the number "twenty" (al-'ish-rūn) is considered it would be referred to by the term "half" (al-nisf); and if its relation to number thirty (al-thalāthūn) is considered it would be referred to by the term "third" (al-thuluth). In the same manner, it is possible to be known by other terms upon the difference of its relation to other numbers. These attributes by which al-'asharah has been described, on the basis of the difference in those relations, are one on the one hand, and many on the other; that is, if the aspect of these

attributes which reflect the essence of al-'asharah is considered, there will be no multiplicity in al-'asharah; but if the aspect which reflects the divisions of the numbers to which al-'asharah is related is considered, then it will be multiple because of the multiplicity of numbers related to it.

Likewise, the unity is necessary to the essence of the Necessary Being. How will the unity not be necessary to it while the oneness (al-aḥadiyah) which is more specific than the unity (al-waḥdah) is necessary to it since it is impossible to find in other essences those characteristics which exist in it? The unity is necessary for the sun because it has no second in existence; but the oneness is not necessary to it because it is possible to find a second to it. If you view the relation of the Necessary Essence to itself you will find it to be one (simple), not many in any sense; if the mystic's heart views the essence through his vision he will find it the same without any difference. However, due to the multiplicity of the relation of the essence to other existent beings which deserve existence from the Necessary Essence, not from themselves, the initiate must needs change terms for it (the essence) so that the realities of those relations can be brought to the feeble-minded through them. If the essence is related to the emanation (sudūr) of existent things from it, and it is known that they are possible things and that a possible thing must be created by a Necessary Being, it will be termed "might", in accordance with this relation which exists between it and the existent things. However, it may be termed "will"

with regard to another relation; but the intellects (al-qulūb) due to their weakness, think that there is a difference between the Mighty and the Willful One and the Will. This is the utmost that the intellect can reach.

Chapter XXXIII

"The attributes are not the essence itself nor are they other than it".

From this you should know that our statement that the attributes are not the essence itself nor are they other than it is real and true; in no way is a Muslim permitted to disagree with it. He who disagrees with this has taken off the noose of Islām from his neck (that is, he has renounced Islām); this is the view of the doctrine of the righteous predecessors (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥūn) and the leaders who have passed away. In them we have good conduct and satisfactory example to follow; they all agreed on this because of the necessity which the authoritative scholars knew best, but the literalist official interpreters of Islām did not. He who concludes by affirming the essence without the attributes is an ignorant innovator, and he who establishes the attributes different from the essence is a dualist and an infidel, and by his infidelity he is also an ignorant man.

Chapter XXXIV

"Some Qur'ānic verses on the multiplicity of the attributes".

You should know that God, the most High, has described Himself in His holy book, more than once, with many attributes: such as Might (al-Qudrah), Will (al-Ma-shī'ah), Exalting (al-I'zāz), Abasing (al-Idhlāl), Hearing (al-Sam'), Seeing (al-Baṣar), Giving life (al-Ihyā'), Causing death (al-Imātah), and said, glory be to Him, "For verily God has power over everything" (24.45). He said also, "But ye will not unless God wills" (76.30); also "Thou exaltest whom Thou wilt and Thou abasest whom Thou wilt" (3.26); and "There is nothing whatever like Him and He is the one who hears and sees (all things)" (42.11); and "He is the one who gives life and causes death" (23.80). Look how these attributes are numerous according to the multiplicity of the relations of the existent things to His Essence; then, consider all the Attributes on the same criteria. I do not consider you unable to perceive something of the relations in every attribute if you are one of those who practise the intellect ambiguous matters, However, you should strive first to understand what I say to you.

Chapter XXXV

"An Analysis of some of the Attributes".

It is an obvious and indisputable fact that when the sempiternal reality from which existence emanated is examined, and when what is brought into existence and what is yet to be brought into existence and which will be brought into existence by it, in a definite date and known time are considered, there will be a relation for what has already been brought into existence which

does not exist to that which is yet to emanate from it; and this is the difference between existent things and non-existent things with regards to their relation to Him. Then the existent things differ in their relation to Him; the relation of an Angel to His Essence is not like the relation of human beings to it, nor is the relation of human beings to Him like that of animals to Him, nor is the relation of animals to Him like that of plants and that of the plants like that of the Earth or Heaven; nor is also the relation of whiteness to Him like that of redness, nor of an exalted person in this world and in the Hereafter like the relation of an abased person in both of them to Him.

You should know that God Almighty when an exalted thing is related to Him in one way or the other, this relation will necessitate that He be called the Exalter (al-Mu'iz) and when abased people are related to Him, the relation will necessitate that He be called the abaser. If one thinks of Him as being the creator of life and death one would say: "It is He who gives life and death" (23.80). If one thinks of His knowledge encompassing existent things which human beings perceive by both the sense of hearing and sight one would say that He is the Hearing and the Seeing; if one relates all existent things to Him and sees (holds) that every one of them is a dependent on Him, one would say whatever God wishes will happen, and whatever He does not wish will not happen. If one relates to Him existent things which have not yet emanated from Him one will say "It is He who hath power over every thing" (5.123). The concept of power is

acquired (mutalaqāh) from the relation of existent things and non-existent things to Him; whereas the will and volition are only known from the relation of existent things to Him. As for the will it is known through the relation of existent things which belong to the spiritual world to Him; whereas volition is known through the relation of existent things which belong to the material world; both the life giver (al-muhyī) and the one who causes death are known through the relation of every living being and the death to Him. Consider all the attributes in this perspective.

Chapter XXXVI

"There is no duality, in any manner, in the
Essence of the Necessary Being"

Our essences are imperfect and it is only the perfection of the attributes that makes them perfect; for this reason, our power needs will and our will (al-irā-dah) needs knowledge; because power alone is not sufficient to bring an object of power into existence except with will, and this is in regards to us; but as for the Essence of God, the most High, it is perfect and does not need anything in any way. Whoever needs something for anything is imperfect; and such imperfection does not fit the Necessary Being. God's knowledge of something is not different from His will for it nor does His will differ from His power. His essence is sufficient for all things in all aspects. His essence, in relation to objects of will is will; it is one, there is no duality in

it in any aspect.

of

The existence/~~d~~uality in the essence of the necessary Being is totally inconceivable because it is impossible to have two things each of which is necessary by itself because every two things must be different in one aspect, otherwise the duality will not be realized between them. If there were, in existence, two necessary beings, they would differ in some aspect; then that on which they differ must be: either necessary for every thing that is necessary by itself, or unnecessary for it; if it is necessary it should equally exist in the two necessary beings; and if it is not necessary its existence must have been an effect of a cause; verily the Necessary Being is beyond anything of this sort. If you are not satisfied with what we have said about this problem you will have to search for it from those books in which some writers have thoroughly discussed it. I have no more time to dwell on this matter; my aim is not to make this book voluminous in trying to discuss a problem for which scholars have already established a proof; thus it should be sought from its sources.

Chapter XXXVII

"From the point of view of reason the eternity of the world like its contingency is impossible".

If you should say: what is the relation between the Necessary Being, the Heavens and the Earth, for example, whether it has been there all the time or not? If it were there all the time this would mean that Heaven and

Earth are eternal Aparte Ante; if not, how was it brought into existence after non-existence? Was it due to a cause that appears in the Essence of the Necessary Being, a cause which did not exist before, for that is definitely impossible, or was it because of an effect (athar) that appeared on a non-existent thing which used to be non-existent until a specific time, in which this athar did not appear before? This is also impossible. Or was it brought into existence without any cause after it had been non-existent? That is also impossible. You should know that scholars have thoroughly discussed this problem; however, to the people of intuition it is an undoubted fact that the relation of Heavens and Earth to God is like that of something which, for example, is now temporally non-existent but which later comes into existence. I would like to know what would one say about a non-existent thing whose non-existence is obvious when it is afterwards brought into existence? Would he say then that an athar has appeared in the Eternal Aparte Ante, or would he say that an athar has appeared in this non-existent thing, or would he say instead that the non-existent thing is brought into existence without any athar? All these hypotheses are impossible; there is nothing then to say but that the cause of its existence is God, He exists in one and the same state sempiternally and eternally (azalan wa abadan); and the existence of a non-existent thing was delayed by Him because of the absence of a condition which made it deserve existence and made it also ready to accept the light of the sempiternal existence.

Chapter XXXVIII

"The difference between the action of the creator (al-Mūjid) and that of His creatures".

If the form of existence overflows (ufīda) to a non-existent thing like the form of fruit, for example, which did not exist and then became an existent thing after the period of non-existence, there must be a cause for the existence of the form after its being non-existent, and the cause of the existence of all existent things is God, the Most High. All existent things other than God do not have essence in terms of reality, nor do they have any existence; how then can they be the cause of anything else? Of course it is possible to call them cause in the ordinary sense as they are called existent things. In the same way their being existent things has no foundation except through an aspect in which they are proximate to the Eternal Essence. Likewise, it is not possible except through this aspect, that their being the cause should have any existence; and since there is no reality for their own existence there is no reality also for their causality which is a subordinate attribute of those of existent things. Here there is nothing more to say except that: if the cause is God the Most High, why was the effect not present while the cause was? So we will say: (It is not available) because one of its conditions was not present. I will explain this further because there is a need for it.

Chapter XXXIX

"The theory that existent things emanate from one another is a plain infidelity".

Perhaps you will say that it is well-known to the speculative scholars that God should only be the cause of one existent thing; then that thing will be the cause of another thing, and that second thing will be the cause of a third thing and thus this process will lead to the creation of mankind.¹ It is impossible that more than one thing can emanate from one being in all aspects. you should know that this is a risky discussion, and no one is allowed to set his tongue on such things according to the people of intuition. This is an obvious infidelity; there is no difference between those who hold the existence of two eternal things each one of which is necessary by itself, and those who hold the existence of two causes, each of which is capable of creating. Nay, the truth which is beyond doubt is that there is no existent thing in existence that is capable of being a cause of the existence of anything except God; glory be to Him.

The reality of causality depends on the creation (al-İjād) of the form of existence for a non-existent thing. There should be a cause for every effect; because a non-existent thing is not capable of being the source of causality.² The cause must possess a permanent existence in order to be capable of preserving the continuity of existence for the effect. No possible existent thing has a real essence or real existence; the real existence and the Necessary Essence belong exclusively to God. He who has no existence in terms of reality, how can he be

a cause of anything else? He who has himself no existence (in terms of reality) how can he create others? The cause, in reality, is that he whose essence is perfect by itself, then in him existence emanates until it overflows on non-existent things and bestows the form of existence upon them. As for what is not perfect by itself and whose existence and the attributes of his existence are dependent and based on the existence of another, he will be extremely imperfect in his essence; thus he deserves neither the power of creating nor existence itself.

Chapter XL

"The Attributes of creating is restricted to the Necessary Being".

There is a popular example of this: when the light of the sun flows from it onto the moon at night and the light of the moon flows over to the Earth there will be no doubt that the moonlight is not existing by itself, but that it only exists through the sun; then how is it that moonlight with its imperfection can be the cause of the existence of the light that flows onto the Earth? Whoever thinks of this matter should think deeply about it and question himself concerning it. There is no doubt that if he looks into the problem with an objective vision he will see that sunlight is more deserving to be called the cause of the light on Earth than moonlight; because if moonlight has no existence then how does it have the power of creating since the creation is necessarily above existence, and existence comes naturally before creation? certainly moon-

light is considered the cause in the ordinary usage of language (terminus technicus) that will be inconstestable; however, it is not permitted to ignore the dependency of moonlight on the sun-light. For had it not been for the light of the sun, there will be ⁱⁿno way any existence for moon-light. The truth is that he who holds that the cause can be anyone other than the Necessary Being Who is the Truth by Himself and self-subsisting in His Attributes, has associated Him with another thing, and maintained an equal partner for Him; such a person is like the one who considers the moon as an associate of the sun in producing the light.

There is no doubt that if the Necessary Being were considered non-existent nothing will remain in existence in any manner. Therefore nothing dispenses with the Necessary Being in anything; because no existence of anything remains if He were non-existent. I am extremely astonished at a rational being who truly understands this and still abstains from accepting the fact that He (the Necessary Being) and not others is more deserving to be the cause than any one else.

Chapter XLI

"How can we restrict the Attributes of creation to the Necessary Being whereas the existence of some things is necessary for the existence of others?"

Actually our statement that the Necessary Being is more deserving to acquire the attribute of causality

than any one else implies a great imperfection in the Necessary Being; it indicates that some other being apart from Him deserves something, but He deserves it more. It is impossible for anyone apart from Him to deserve anything except through His necessary essence. The only problem to discuss here is to point out that: if the necessary Being is perfect in the causality, why should the existence of ^{effect} ~~the~~ be delayed from Him since the delay of the existence of an effect from the creative cause which is wholly perfect is impossible? If He were imperfect in the causality and His causality were completed by some conditions then, an associate with Him will be established in his being the cause of every thing. What would you say when you do not permit any other being apart from Him to be called a cause despite your recognition that the existence of some things is necessary for the existence of others? This is a problem which is easy for us to solve (daf'uhu). We say: the existence of condition only affects the readiness of the conditioned thing to come into existence, not the causality of the Necessary Essence. In the same manner also the dispersion of the clouds only affects the readiness of the Earth for the light of the sun to shine on it; it does not have any effect at all on the perfection of the sun. No one can rightly maintain that when the clouds disperse their dispersion is the condition by which the causality of the sun for the existence of a conditioned thing is completed, namely, the illumination of the Earth by the Sun; for we say that the dispersion of the clouds is its disappearance, and disappearance is something that belongs to non-existence, and anything belonging to non-existence will not

deserve to be a condition for an existential thing; that is, the creation of something. How then will it deserve to be a cause? This is the most profound explanation beyond which no further explanation can be given. If moonlight is acquired from sunlight, and it is in itself perishable and non-existent, in reality there is no light except that of the sun; thus the light of the moon is like the light of the sun to the extent that it becomes the same. How is it possible then to consider the moon an associate of the sun in producing light? Just as there is no light but that of the sun, there is also no existence except that of God. Thus the existence of an existent thing is not outside the existence of God, rather it is it (the very existence of God).

Chapter XLII

"In their reality existent things are like pictures reflected in the mirror".

Everything in existence, with respect to reality, is perishable. There is no eternal existence (al-baqā') for anything except for the existence of the Everlasting and self-subsisting Being; just as it is a fact that the picture which is in the mirror is in reality perishable there is no permanence except for the external picture. This view is true in the ordinary sense, insofar as a person is concerned (satisfied) with tangible example; otherwise from the point of view of the mystics the external picture together with the mirror are also perishable, in the same way that the internal picture in the mirror is annihilated without any difference.

Chapter XLIII

"The usefulness of looking into a mirror".

A mirror is a great admonition for anyone with sight. He who sufficiently looks into the mirror without having many of his problem solved does not deserve to be considered an intelligent person. Upon my life, no rational person ever looks into the mirror without having some difficult problems occurring to his mind and doubting about obvious things; despite this, however, many problems will become clear to him. If there were no use for iron except for making mirror that would be a sufficient witness to the truthfulness of His word, "We sent iron wherein is great might and many uses for men". (57.25). Why should it not be the case since there are in iron many uses compared to which the mirror is base? Nevertheless, it has many remarkable uses which are impossible for the intellect to enumerate. The mirror in reality is for intelligent people (the people with intuition) because they see in it the form of the intellect which is incapable of perceiving many realities. It (the mirror) will be enough to convince a person that the intellect is prevented from perceiving many outward tangible objects, let alone the inward rational things. He who wishes to see his intellect in its real form of limitation must needs increase his looking into the mirror. What an excellent view that demonstrates to the intellect its incapacity and its falsity in its wide and lofty claim to perceive divine matters. I will not deny that the intellect is created to perceive some great ambiguous matters, but it would not impress me if it exceeds its boundaries and goes beyond its limit.

Chapter XLIV

"A very close look at the mirror: conclusion".

Through reflection in the mirror an image conformable to the external picture appears in it. At first glance and first instance the intellect differentiates the external existence from the internal one; one of which causes the other to be a subordinate and the other of which remains a subordinate. It is inconceivable for any one to doubt that. The actuality of the subordinate existence is due to a relation that exists in a special way between the external picture and the mirror; if the eye examines this relation which exists between them, it will perceive the internal subordinate picture inside the mirror which does not exist in reality, but which exists outwardly only; the intellect would not doubt that the existence of the internal picture is not essential, that is to say that it does not exist by itself independent in existence; but its existence depends on four things, namely, the mirror, the external picture, the existing relation and the eye's examination of it (the mirror); for this reason when this relation is negated the existence of the internal picture would be negated, too. Thus a rational being would know that that picture does not have an independent existence. If one imagines the existence of a mirror or water or any similar object that reflects images without assuming any change in it, no creature would realize that that internal picture is dependent, in existence, on the external one and that this is a peculiar characteristic of mirror and water; no other substance such as mud whitewash and other similar

substance shares this characteristic with them; since, however, the external picture is changeable and the existing relation also changes consequently, the internal picture will in the same way change in accordance with the change of the external picture; any rational being will not doubt the fact that the internal picture is dependent on the existence of the external one, and that the external picture precedes the internal picture in existence; but it precedes it only in levels (rank) and not in time.

Chapter XLV

"The possibility that the intellect can perceive existent things".

Let a rational being ponder truthfully (over the fact) that if there were no mirror and someone narrates to him what he sees in the mirror, namely, the reflection of images in it, would he believe in the existence of this or would he deny it? I do not believe that there is any sincere person who looks into things with clear vision and doubts that such a man would deny existence of that thing and establish some deductive proofs for its impossibility; and it would be impossible for him to see any aspect of error in this deductive proof of his. Be aware now and do not hasten to refute what your weak intellect cannot perceive. The intellect is created to perceive some existent things just as vision is created to perceive some existent things, and it is incapable of perceiving audible things, objects of the sense of smell and objects of the sense of taste; likewise, the intellect

is incapable of perceiving many of the existent things. Indeed it perceives some few limited things, in relation to many existent things for which it is incapable to perceive. Then it is to be noticed that all existent things in relation to the sempiternal knowledge are like a mote in relation to the throne. Nay, the mote in relation to the throne is something whereas all existent things in relation to God's knowledge are nothing at all.

I have only mentioned this on account of fear that your weak intellect may hasten to say: the conceivable things (al-ma'qūlāt) have no limit; how could you strictly limit them? He who considers all existent things as limited, nay, that they are nothing, would not attach great importance to a judgement like that.

The impossibility of the limitation, in his opinion, is to be found only in the sempiternal attributes such as Might, Will, Knowledge, and Generosity which bestow the form of existent things on them. This generosity is necessary for the Necessary Essence because since it is perfect, and even above Perfection, the generosity which necessitates the flow of existence onto non-existent things becomes certainly necessary to it (the Essence), just as, for example, necessity itself is inseparable from it. If the Essence were devoid of this generosity it would have been imperfect. Just as the sun, when the horizons are illuminated by it, that would be from the perfection of its illumination. If this attribute were not in the sun, the sun would have been imperfect, and would need something to complete its luminosity. "To Him belongs the sublime similitude in the Heavens and the Earth. He is the Mighty, the Wise" (30.27).

Chapter XLVI

"A very close look into the mirror elucidates the reality of the existence of existent things".

In many aspects people who understand take warning by looking into the mirror, and it is almost impossible to define the warnings in the mirror; among the things they take warning from is that when they look into the mirror, they would see the reality of His words: "Every thing will perish except His Face" (28.88); and the statement of the Prophet - blessing and peace be on him - that human beings are asleep, they will wake up when they die¹; and know that the relation of the material world (al-mulk) and that of the spiritual world (al-malakūt), with regards to existence to the Face of the ever-living, selfsubsisting Being is like the relation between the internal picture in the mirror and the external one; because there is no real existence for either al-mulk or al-malakūt ; rather their existence is subordinate to the existence of the true Face whose existence is real. Some creatures, nay, most of them, believe that the existent things which they see in this world do have a real existence; however, when the relation which exists between their sight and those tangible existent things is negated the veil will be removed from their sight; and the deception will be lifted; thus they would be awakened from their slumber and know for certain that "every thing (that exists) will perish except His Face", unless an existent being sempiternally and eternally, has assumed the selfsubsisting nature of His everlasting Face, whereupon the existence of the selfsubsisting Being (al-Qayyūm)

would be the one who assumes the self-subsisting nature of His eternity - glory be to the One, the Almighty. Then, He calls upon creatures from the throne saying: "Whose is the kingdom today? It is God's, the One the Omnipotent" (40.16).

In a way they will realize that there is no doubt about it. He who ponders carefully about these terms without being able to discover their real meaning should refrain from denying them; because beneath them there are many secret wonders which no tongue can satisfactorily explain, nor can any explanation demonstrate their reality.

Chapter XLVII

"The relation between the Power of God and that of human beings".

We have now come back to the secret discussion. There is no doubt that God Almighty has created in human beings an entity (ma'na) which is called power in the ordinary usage of creatures. By this ma'nā man is able to speak, after his silence whenever he likes. The outward cause of the existence of the speech after its non-existence ('adamihi), in the view point of the ordinary people, is the ma'nā which they call power. It is known that the power would exist while the effect, which is the speech, would not exist; not because of a defect in the cause, but rather due to the absence of the condition which is the volition (al-mashī'ah), the existence of the speech from its cause which is called power in the ordi-

nary usage, is dependent on the existence of its condition, namely, the volition; it is impossible for the conditioned things (effect) to exist while its condition (the cause) is non-existent. The impossible thing would not be an object of power because the effect of the power does not appear except on an object of power, just as the effect of sight does not appear except in a visible thing, nor does the effect of smell appear except in an object of smell; and this applies to all comprehensible things. If the seeing power is incapable, for example, of perceiving the planets covered by the clouds, that would not be an evidence of defectiveness in the sight; likewise, if a non-existent thing is obscured by the absence of condition, the sempiternal power would not bring it into existence unless the cover of the absence of condition is removed, not because of a defect in the sempiternal power, but because of the fact that the non-existent thing is still impossible to exist (muhāl al-wujūd). When the cover of non-existence is lifted from it, it becomes possible and necessitated by the sempiternal power; just as it will be the case if the veil of clouds is removed and the Earth becomes ready to accept the light of the sun.

Chapter XLVIII

"The definition of the possible and the impossible things".

The relation of an impossible thing in itself to the sempiternal power is like the relation of an object

of smell, for example, to the seeing eye (al-'ayn al-mub-sirah); the object of smell would never become visible not because of a defect in the sense of sight but because of the fact that it is not an object of vision. The existence would not overflow from the sempiternal power onto the impossible thing not because of a defect in the Divine Power, but because of the fact that the impossible thing is not an object of power. The relation of a non-existent thing which is possible in itself (its essence), to the sempiternal power is like the relation of a visible thing which is covered to the sense of vision and when the cover is removed from it the perception power will perceive; likewise, the sempiternal power would bring into existence the non-existent thing which is possible in itself (by virtue of its essence) when its conditions are available; but as long as it needs a condition its existence is still impossible, not because it is in itself impossible but because the impossibility is due to another factor; the possible thing in itself is that whose conditions for existence are necessary, and the impossible thing in itself is that whose conditions for existence are impossible; one should think carefully about this matter and not oppose it with pedantry lest one's foot slip away when he is unaware.

Chapter XLIX

"The fact that something is impossible or possible in itself does not contradict its being dependent on the Necessary Being".

The rationalists (speculative scholars) may say

that a possible thing draws its possibility from itself and an impossible thing draws its impossibility by itself from itself; thus a feeble-minded person would imagine some erroneous concepts from these terms, and may make serious mistakes. How could the possibility of a possible thing be drawn from its essence while its essence is not from itself, but emanates from another thing? If its essence is from another thing the possibility which is an attribute of it is more likely to be from outside it. The dependence of the described essence on their creator happens on one level, and the dependence of their subordinate attributes on Him happens on two levels. This is the judgement (rule) of the possible things concerning their possibility if they exist. As for the possible thing which has not been brought into existence, it has neither essence nor attributes. How can a cause be sought for it and its attributes since a cause should not be sought for a non-existent thing but only for an existent thing after its being non-existent? I have only mentioned this because of their (speculative scholars) statement "the possibility is an integral part of the possible thing" has a correct meaning.

Since imaginations often err about this one should seek assistance from what I have said by avoiding the lure of imagination. This in itself is the answer to their statement that the impossible is impossible by itself; if the impossible thing does not have essence how can a cause be sought from its impossibility which is a subordinate attribute? If one says that the non-existent thing is non-existent by itself there will be a correct

meaning for it according to those who are firmly grounded in knowledge; it is, however, not allowed to imagine an essence for a non-existent thing and then imagine also that a non-existent thing is something that exists for that essence; because non-existence means an attribute, and the attribute should not exist except after the existence of a described thing. How can non-existence be brought into existence when the non-existent thing which is described by it does not exist? In this the imaginations of the feeble-minded often make much mistakes. However, it is easy for the authoritative scholars to avoid similar errors.

Chapter L

"Why did God create the world at a particular time and not before or after that time?"

The Heavens and the Earth emanated from the sempiternal power. Before their existence there was neither "before" (qabl) nor "after" (ba'd); thus it is not relevant to ask why they had been brought into existence before the time of their existence. The "before" and the "after" are two accidents of time (zamān), and time did not exist until after the existence of bodies (al-ajsām). Just as it is impossible to have "above" (fawq) or "under" (taht) before the existence of the bodies because they are two accidents of space (makān), so it is also impossible to have "before" and "after" before the existence of bodies, because their existence depends on the existence of time and space, and the existence of time is

dependent on the existence of motion; and motion in its existence depends on the existence of bodies; thus, time is the place of motion just as space is the place of the bodies.

Chapter LI

"To state that the world is eternal in time is sheer stupidity".

The statement of whoever maintains that the world is eternal in time is sheer insanity (haws) and useless because should one ask him: what do you mean by the world? He might either say: by it, I mean all bodies, such as the heavens and the elements of which the world is composed (that is, water, earth, air, and fire) or, by it, I mean every existing thing except God Almighty. According to this, all intellects, souls and bodies are included in the term "world". If he says: by the "world", I mean all possible existing things, or other things, then, according to this, most of the existing things which are subsumed in the term "world" do not depend for their existence on the existence of time; rather, their existence must necessarily precede it (time). How can one then say that the world is eternal in time when most of the existing things in the world have preceded time in existence?

If he says: by the "world", I mean all bodies, it will also be impossible in this context to say that all bodies are eternal in time because this would mean that bodies had existed since the existence of time. Thus,

this would imply that time precedes the bodies in existence and that is not correct; rather, the bodies precede time in existence, and time comes into existence after the bodies even though it precedes them in level and essence.

Should one argue that his statement that the world is eternal in time does not mean what we have mentioned, we shall say that we cannot understand his statement in a different way. We have discussed what we understand. As for his purpose, which we do not understand, we shall leave it to the blind man. It is therefore up to him to explain its meaning in the way he understands it; if it is really true, we will agree with him on that; but if not, we will discuss it to the best of our ability.¹

Chapter LII

"The Şūfī point of view on the problem of the eternity and the contingency of the world".

The truth of this is to say that time has been in existence from the moment of the existence of motion, and one cannot say that motion has been in existence from the moment of the existence of time, because even if this can be true from a certain perspective, it is a very wrong presentation. If this is impossible, how will it be possible then to say that bodies have been in existence at the very moment that time came into existence? For example, if bodies were non-existent on account of the lack of condition for them, and then they came into exis-

tence because of the presence of that condition, that would be possible; but neither "before" nor "after" existed before the existence of bodies. When they came into existence they only came as such without any difference in time.

If one claims that bodies came into existence from the moment of the existence of the Truth (God) this would be a gross mistake, although it is the belief of majority of scholars who claimed to have excelled their predecessors and successors in the correct view-point.

Other things that one must needs understand at this stage is that bodies do not in any way exist where God exists, neither in the present nor in the past, nor in the future. Whoever maintains that the Universe exists in the present, with God, is grossly mistaken in his view because with God no place or time can exist. He encompasses time, place and all other existent things. The preceding of His existence over all things is the same; His existence (necessariiy) precedes the existence of the Universe just as His existence precedes, for example, the existence of the form of these words written in this book without any difference whatsoever (in time). He who differentiates between them is still a victim of anthropomorphism, and to him God is not beyond time, just as He is not free of space in the point of view of the ordinary men who claim that He is a body like any tangible object. Such a belief in God is totally remote from the real belief which the Şūfī acquires at the beginning of his religious exercises and contemplation.

God, the most High, precedes the future in the same manner that He precedes the past without any difference (in time); this is a certainty to the Ṣūfī, but the scholars are necessarily unable to perceive this; if they were not unable to perceive this they would not have said that the first intellect is simultaneous in existence with the existence of God, just as they would never say, for example, that the picture of these letters inscribed on this paper is simultaneous in existence ^{with} God, the Truth, who is beyond such suppositions, and even from the suppositions of prophets and the protégés (al-muqarrabūn). Think of this thoroughly and thus your imperfect intellect will definitely acquire some of its meanings even though the understanding of what is really meant by it depends on the opening of the vision of the gnosis, whose position with regard to the vision of the intellect is like the position of the embryo with regard to the womb, nay, the position of the intellect compared to the eye that you see with a baby in the cradle. I shall give you further explanation at a more suitable place; perhaps the less mature people will sense some of its aroma (get some understanding of it).

Chapter LIII

"The sempiternity of God is ever present with His eternity without any difference (in time)".

The truth is that God has existed in the past without anything existing with Him, and He is presently existing without anything existing with Him. His being

sempiternal is ever present with His being eternal without any difference (in time). It is not possible nor even conceivable that there is any other existence where His Majesty exists. It is inconceivable that bats can exist at any place where the power of the illumination of the sun prevails. Let this ordinary example suffice to you because of the inability of your weak intellect, and your pseudo knowledge ('ilmuka al-muzakhrat); then strive your utmost haply so your weak intellect will benefit from it. But take care to avoid anthropomorphism.

The existence of God is not transitory (zamaniyyan) and thus one cannot rightly say that God has existed without anything existing with Him. It is not proper to say that He presently exists without anything existing with Him. Be very careful not to desire a full comprehension of what you understand through your intellect whose position concerning the perception of the existence of God is like the position of bats in relation to the perception of the light of the sun. Either you must in no way pay attention to what is in this chapter or anything like it and receive it without refutation or acceptance, or you should preserve these words respectfully. Ask God Almighty to provide you with a vision which can perceive things like these, not through the media of words because that is impossible, but through the other aspect.

If you perceive it through this aspect then, you should definitely know that there is no expression in existence that can convey the reality of what you have perceived better than what I have mentioned; then you

would also definitely know that whoever puts ideas like these in the terms already mentioned has committed a serious error. You should know that if we say that God has existed without anything existing with Him this will imply that He is an object of similitude; because the term "was" indicates the existence of an existent thing in the past; if we say that there was no existent thing with Him then how could time exist with Him (since we have stated that nothing was with Him)? If that is the case there will be no difference between our statement that He has existed with nothing existing with Him, and our statement that He presently exists with nothing existing with Him. This is the most that can be said here, owing to the limitation of terms and expression.

Chapter LIV

"The sempiternity and the eternity of
Necessary Being: a supplement".

If an attic window (rawzanah) inside you is open to the spiritual world you will witness the clarity of the situation in whatever you see during your journey to the spiritual world; thus you will do away with listening to its explanation. Perhaps you wish now to know the concept of the sempiternity and the manner of flying to the spiritual world, the outwardness of which seems to be impossible. You should know that he who thinks that the sempiternity (al-azaliyah) is something in the past has committed a detestable mistake; this is an imagination which prevails with many people. ~~Wherever~~ sempi-

ternity exists there will^{be} neither the past nor the future because it encompasses the future in the same manner it encompasses the past without any difference in time. Any one who believes in the existence of any difference between them his intellect is still a captive in the hands of his imagination. The time of Adam is not closer to sempiternity than this time of ours. Nay, the relation of all times to sempiternity is the same. Perhaps the relation of it to all times, for example, is like the relation between the knowledge of all places, because knowledge cannot be described as being close to a place or far from it, rather its relation to all places is the same; it (the knowledge) exists every where, yet all places are empty of it. For anyone with rational knowledge this is easy to understand. However, it is very difficult for those restricted by the limitation of the material world, those whose wondering vision in the spiritual world is yet to be opened. In the same manner the relation between sempiternity and all times in general ought to be held because it is with all times, and in every time, yet it encompasses all times, and its existence precedes all times, and no time extends over it, just as a place does not extend over knowledge. If you understand these ideas you should know that in their ideal meanings there is no difference whatsoever between sempiternity and eternity; rather, if the existence of that meaning, with its relation to the past is considered, the term sempiternity will be borrowed for it, and if its existence with its relation to the future is considered the term eternity will be borrowed for it. There must be two different terms because of the difference in the

two relations; otherwise, creatures will go astray from the right path in understanding it.

Now you should know that when we say that God wished or wishes, God knew or knows, God could or can, it is for some necessity such as this, otherwise, since there is no past or future for Him, there will be no sense in establishing any difference in His action, be it connected with the past or with the future; certainly if the will is related to the past, they will say, He wished; if it is related to the future, they will say He will wish. This is the key to many secrets and great problems. If this is the case, it will plainly be impossible for a novice to reach the ma'nā of sempiternity through knowledge; certainly it is possible for him to perceive its concepts through knowledge, but the perception of the concepts of something is one thing and the arrival at it is another matter. We have only said that it is impossible to reach it by means of knowledge because the one who devotes his time to this quest is still in the shackle of time, and there will be no arrival at the sempiternity except after being released from this shackle.

Chapter LV

"The continuity of existent things in existence implies a continuity in the process of creation (al-ījād)".

You should know that the shining of the light of the sun on the Earth necessitates a special relation

between the Earth and the Sun; if that relation were negated the readiness of the Earth to receive the light of the sun would be negated also. On the other hand, if this relation continues between them, the acceptance of the earth for the light of the sun would continue. The acceptance continues as long as this relation continues. At any breath (whenever) this relation exists the acceptance will exist; and also at any moment when this relation is negated the acceptance will be negated accordingly. Then if this relation continues in repeated manners (fī anfas muta'addidah), the acceptance will in one and the same manner also continue in those moments; thus the less mature people, for example, will think that the rays which exist at each moment are the same rays which exist at the moment which comes before or after it; however, according to the gnostics who see the light of God, this view is wrong. Nay, the rays which exist at each moment necessitate the relation which exists at that moment, and the relations which exist in those moments are necessarily variable.¹

For the same reason, it is also possible to give judgements on one of these relations which are not permissible to be used as judgements on other relations; for example, as one may say that the relation of so and so is simultaneous in existence with the motion of so and so, and the relation which comes after it is not simultaneous in existence with that motion, and by this the difference between the two relations will definitely be realized. Since those relations were different, the acceptance at each moment will necessitate another relation independent

and distinctive in itself. You should know that the rays which exist in a specific moment is not the one which existed before or after it, not even for one moment. Indeed, since these various relations are one in the sense that they necessitate the acceptance in the same manner, some feeble-minded people will believe that the rays which exist at this moment are the same rays which exist at the moment seen before or after it; just as the one who sees Zayd, 'Amr and Bakr as one person in the concept of humanness and that each of them is his companion himself, one should realize this because it will be needed as an ordinary example in the following chapter, and a great principle will be built on it.

Chapter LVI

"Continuation of the preceding Chapter".

There is no doubt that the shining upon a non-existent thing of the light of existence will require a specific relation between it and the sempiternal power; if this relation continues then the acceptance by the non-existent thing of the illumination of the light of the power will continue, but if the relation were negated the acceptance would be negated also; however, the acceptance will continue as long as the relation continues. The acceptance at each moment necessitates the relation which exists at that very moment; thus the relations are variable, and therefore the acceptance which is in this moment, for example, is not the acceptance which is in that moment. Though the acceptance

at various moments resembles each other, that is because of the similarity of the variable relations, and their unity in the concept of necessitating the acceptance. If you see something that has existed for many years in the same manner, that is due to the continuity of the relation which necessitates the existence in those years, moment after moment (nafasan ba'd nafasin). You should be certain that the existence at every moment necessitates the relation which exists in that moment itself, the existence of the Heavens, the Earth and all existent things that you see in this moment, is different from the existence which you will see after or which you have seen before. Indeed, since the variable relations which necessitate the existence of existent things are the same, in the sense that each relation necessitates existence, all predecessors were in error except those whom God wished to save, and those are indeed very few.

This chapter is extremely ambiguous, very difficult to tackle, hard to comprehend and inaccessible to the understanding, and the feet often slip in such a problem; it is not conceivable for the intellect to perceive this except through constant meditation, sufficient study, through research with great intelligence and far-reaching effort. Indeed, the gūfi however can conceive it at first glance, through the vision of gnosis (al-ma'rifah) without any effort.

To understand this chapter any rational being who seeks assistance from the light of the lamp in which another existence is renewed in every instance, will find

it easy to perceive. Children believe that the light of the lamp which they see burning in the same manner is one thing, but scholars definitely know that its form is renewed at every moment into another, and this is the way the sūfīs look at every existent thing except God. Perhaps your intellect will understand something like this if you think constantly of it, and focus your mind on it, but generally this door is closed to the intellect.

Chapter LVII

"The emanation of multiple existent things from the One".

You should know that God has been in existence without anything existing with Him, and that it can never be conceived that there can be anything existing with Him since there is nothing that can be imagined as existing together with the existence of God, and nothing exists beside God. Yet He exists with everything; had it not been for His togetherness (ma'iyyatuhu) with every thing no existent thing would remain in existence. The existent things, in their emanation from Him, are in hierarchy (lahā tartīb), some of them precede others, for example, the simple (al-mufrad), and others follow them, such as the composite (al-murakkab). This can only be true when considered from the intellectual point of view; but it is false when considered from the mystical point of view. The intellect will in no way perceive the reality of this. So when confronted with a problem like this it will consider it thoroughly and reject it violently

(the intellect is furious and in a state of revolt when it hears anything like this) and says: How can one thing be true and false at the same time? So one has to counter-act its violent rejection with this ordinary example; if it is satisfied with it, all well and good, but if it is not, one has to be careful not to repudiate this ordinary example as long as one is still a captive in the domain of intellect, and is imprisoned in its confines.

The ordinary example is as follows: if a child issues a judgment on two persons saying that one of them is nearer to him than the other and is told by some mature scholar that his judgment is correct only if he is considering the matter by sense-perception, then he is correct; however, if he is considering the matter in an intellectual perception, he will know that his judgment is wrong because the nearest thing in the view of sense-perception is the farthest thing from the viewpoint of the intellect (sense-perception and rationalism being two different points of view. Therefore, the statement is correct, and the view of the child is also correct from the point of view of an intelligent person. However, his refutation of the intelligent man's claim is wrong despite the fact that this refutation is necessary for him (the child), for he is incapable of understanding anything other than it, and the way of making him understand is closed to the intelligent man. Therefore, the emanation of existing things from the sempiternal power must be explained in such a way that it is impossible for the intellect to perceive it, even if that way is wrong from the mystic point of view. The speculative scholars have dwelt much

on this explanation but their conclusion in this matter is based on their false assumptions.

As it appears to our intellect, the truth of this is to say that existence emanates from God Almighty and overflows onto the first existent thing which is the nearest angel to Him, and the nearest of all existent things (to Him) according to the intellect; it seems that the spirit (al-rūh) which is mentioned in His holy statement, "Upon the day when the Spirit and the Angels stand in ranks" (78.38), is an expression of it (that is, the first existent thing). The existence of this Rūh was a condition by which another thing was ready to accept the light of the sempiternal power ¹ and the readiness of that thing on condition of the existence of Rūh is like the readiness of Rūh without condition. Then the existence of this second thing becomes the condition for the existence of a third thing; it can also be the condition for the existence of two things: third and fourth. But feeble minds have no way of understanding the reality of this matter as it ought to be except that they can perceive the possibility of the two aspects already referred to; that is to say that the existence of the second thing is possible to be the condition of the existence of two things just as it is possible to be the condition of the existence of one thing. This means that with regard to its essence alone it is a condition of one thing but with regard to its essence together with Rūh it is a condition of other thing; both the two aspects are conceivable. This portion, concerning the manner of the emanation of numerous existent things from the One,

the Truth, is sufficient for you. Verily if it is possible for the second to be the condition of two things, it would also be possible for every one of them to be the condition for the existence of the third and fourth existent things.²

Chapter LVIII

"What comes between the Necessary Being and the first Heaven".

To judge that nothing exists between the Necessary Being, the Truth and the first Heaven except three Angels, one of them being spiritual and the other two being cherubs (karubiān), is a wrong assumption.¹ Maybe there are more than a thousand intermediaries between Him and the first Heaven; nay, this is the truth according to the gnostics. Indeed, when the scholars in their ascension to the first intermediary failed to prove the motion of the first Heaven by any means other than these three angels, they certainly did not seek any thing in their descension, but only these three. This is certainly a pre-supposition which no one is permitted to maintain in the field of speculative sciences. Our judgement that there are many intermediaries between the Necessary Being and the first Heaven is true and correct, and the gnostics do realize it not by means of deductive method but by another method, because if it were through the deductive method it would have been possible to mention it; but since it depends on the opening of the vision of the gnosis within the heart, it is not possible to be mentioned.

However, since its possibility is conceivable, a great deal of attention is drawn to it. Of the things that assist the intellect to believe this, is its constant observation of the planets which exist on the eighth Heaven which the scholars call the "Throne."

Chapter LIX

"The realization of the Gnosis through experience is like the intellect's realization of the necessary knowledge."

Every existent thing whose existence is permanent is always being recreated through the Everlasting and Self-subsisting One; and at every moment another existence similar to that before it, is being renewed; the gnostics have clearly realized this (yushāhidūna dhālika) but it is impossible, however, for scholars to perceive it. Think constantly about what I have mentioned before; then perhaps the reality of this matter will be revealed to you; may God Almighty absolve me from any calamity in mentioning it, and may He also absolve those who look into it. May He also make the benefit which creatures draw from it outbalance the damage (it may do). May God bestow His mercy on any servant of His who looks into it (this book) with the vision of al-marifah, who strives hard to understand it, who abandons fanaticism, surveillance against others (murāqabat al-jawānib) and dissimulation (al-mudāhanah) in defending his school of thought against others; nay, he should be motivated to read it or to look into it for no other reason than seeking after the truth by means of certitude; because the

happiness of the soul depends on it. These concepts that I have mentioned in these chapters are discovered by experience in a manner which is not less obvious than the manner in which the intellect discovers a priori knowledge, only that it is impossible to explain those concepts by these terms. However, it is true and beyond doubt that whoever knows God Almighty his tongue becomes languid, that is to say that he will not find suitable words to express the real concept which he has experienced to people's minds.

Chapter LX

"The hierarchy of existent things and their multiplicity from the point of view of both the scholar and the Ṣūfī".

Those who see things through the eye of ^{the} intellect will see hierarchy in the essence of existent things; they will see that some of these things are by necessity nearer to the First ,the Truth (God), than others; and it will be inconceivable to them that it could be otherwise. They see that the source of existence is one and that the existent things which emanate from Him are many; certainly, they must need waste their energy by trying to explain the manner of the emanation of multiple things from one Simple Being. As for those who see through the eye of al-ma'rifah they will by no means see any hierarchy for the existent things nor will they see any of those things nearer to God than the others; rather they will see His essence simultaneous (musāwīqāh) with every existent thing

just as (in the same manner) it is simultaneous with the first being from the view of the scholars, without any difference. As long as one has not reached such a stage the meaning of God's statement would not be clear to him "It is God who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they cease to exist and if they should cease to exist, none would sustain them after Him" (35.41); also he would not understand the meaning of His statement "Whithersoever ye turn there is the face of God" (2.116); rather, from listening to the verses like these, he will only attain the sounds of the letters and the words.

Then the people of al-ma'rifah do not see His simultaneity with the existent things as the scholars see it with the first intellect; rather they see the source of existent things as many, while seeing all existent things like a mote in relation to His greatness. He who looks at God Almighty and at His actions through this vision, will not need to know the nature of the emanation of the many from the One; thus all that was said in this context will be useless to him, and he can dispense with it. You should make some effort to believe in the existence of an eye inside the human being (the eye) whose discoveries (mudrakātuhā) when it is open, belong to the kind of what has been referred to in our statement that the sempiternal Being is simultaneous in existence with the existence of every existent being. The intellect is incapable of perceiving that; it inevitably sees some things nearer to the Everlasting One and the Self-subsisting Being than others.

Whenever you perceive something which is impossible for you to explain except by expressing it through the understanding of a gnostic, which is the subject matter of this chapter, you should certainly know that the eye of gnosis is opened in your heart; thereafter all your acquired knowledge will become the seeds of the fruit of gnosis.

Chapter LXI

"The difference between rational knowledge (al-'ilm) and gnosis (al-ma'rifah)."

Perhaps your soul will desire to understand the difference between rational knowledge and gnosis; then you should know that every concept which is possible to be expressed univocally to the extent that if a teacher explains it to his student once or twice or more, in univocal expression, the student becomes equal to him in the knowledge of that concept, then that concept belongs to rational knowledge. But any concept which cannot be explained by any expression except by equivocal words must belong to Gnosis. This is the term I use in this book; and it is the way of expression which is predominant among the people of the hearts (the ṣūfīs). The term 'ilm may be used to mean Gnosis in the Qur'ān; for example, God, the most High, says: "Nay, rather it is signs, clear signs in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge" (29.49); and also "God bears witness that there is no (other) god but He, and the angels, and men possessed of knowledge (bear witness also)" (3.18); and

"And whom we had taught knowledge proceeding from Us" (18.66). Divine knowledge can never be expressed by univocal terms; for this reason, when Moses¹ wanted to acquire them from al-Khaḍir² through study, al-Khaḍir adamantly refused and said to him: "If thou would follow me, ask me no question about anything until I have spoken to you concerning it" (18.70). That is until the eye of gnosis is opened in your heart, then you will be certain of what you have previously seen. On the other hand you will have no means of perceiving these realities before the opening of that eye except by means of interpretation as al-Khaḍir said to Moses when the former decided to part with him, "Now I will tell thee the interpretation of those things over which thou couldst not bear patiently" (18.79). If Moses were patient until the time of the opening of the eye of Gnosis, al-Khaḍir would have spoken to him concerning what he was anxious to know, which will mean his seeing the reality of the explanation to such an extent that there would be no need for interpretation. For this reason, the Prophet, may God bestow blessing and peace upon him, said: "May God bestow His mercy upon my brother Moses, for if he were patient with al-Khaḍir he would have seen many wonders".³³ Considered literally this tradition may imply a disapproval of Moses' conduct with al-Khaḍir.

Chapter LXII

"Gnoses are knowledge gained through divine inspiration whose reality cannot be understood through equivocal expressions".

The Prophets' knowledge are acquired by inspiration; whoever acquires his knowledge from books and teachers is not, insofar as his knowledge is concerned, among the inheritors of the Prophets, except if one were to expand the meaning of the term "heritage" (mīrāth). A Prophet's knowledge is acquired not from any source, but from God Himself, the most Glorious, as He says, "And thy Lord is most bountiful; it is He Who taught by the pen, taught man what he knew not" (96.4-5). You should never think that the teaching of God is exclusively possessed by the prophets only. God says, "So, fear God; for it is God that teaches you" (2.182). Whoever in his devotion attains the real piety must have been taught by God what he knew not, and he will be with Him as He says, "God is with those who restrain themselves and those who are good doers" (16.128).

No one will understand the realities of such knowledge if they are expressed in equivocal terms, except those who acquire their meaning by experiencing the teaching of God. For this reason God Almighty says: "And those parables We set for the people, but none understands them save those who know" (29.43). He who did not study the Qur'ān from God Almighty directly is not among those who know and who are referred to in the Qur'ān "but none understands them save those who know"; this, in an ordinary example, is like the speech of lovers concerning union and separation and other symptoms of love and everything connected with it. When the ears hear the speech of lovers they will not understand its meaning in the real sense; only those understand who have themselves

experienced love. This is the meaning of the statement of al-Junayd¹, may God be pleased with him, "Our speech is an allusion". It is inconceivable to find a gnostic who would express himself otherwise. He who tries to interpret the meaning of mystics rationally and intellectually will greatly be mistaken (zallat qadamuhu).

May God bestow His mercy on Abū al-‘Abbās Ibn Surayj² who, when asked by one of his pupils about what al-Junayd says, said: "We do not know the symbols of those people (the ṣūfīs), nevertheless, there is light in al-Junayd's speech". Ibn Surayj was likely one of the people of "taste" (the mystics) because this statement of his suggests that; but he was engrossed with rational knowledge. There are many people like him among the scholars (the ‘Ulamā’).

Chapter LXIII

"The classifications of Rational Knowledge".

Intellectual problems are somehow classified into those with two aspects and those with three aspects. Those matters which have three aspects may be thought of as belonging to the Gnosis not to the knowledge; however, this is a wrong presumption and I have written this chapter so that you may rid yourself of such presumptions. As for the first category, that of the two aspects, one of which is based on the instruction of a teacher who is the guide, and the other of which is related to the understanding of a student who is searching for guidance, it

is exemplified in the science of grammar, medicine, mathematics and other branches of knowledge. As for the second category which is the one with three aspects, one of its aspects is related to the instruction of the teacher, the second is related to the understanding of the student, and the third is related to the student's experience. This is the law governing most of the problems related to the attributes as well as those related to the states of the soul (ahkām al-nafs), such as the judgement that the soul has been in existence before the existence of the body and the judgement on the states of the soul after death. Such problems are very difficult for the intellect to understand, especially the reality of the attributes of the sempiternal knowledge, and the manner in which it encompasses all particulars, the attributes of the sempiternal power, the reality of the concept of creation in respect to God, the nature of the concept of the sempiternal volition (mashī'ah) and the difference between it¹ and the "Will" (al-irādah). Most erudite scholars claim to have understood the concept of these attributes, but their understanding of them is sheer anthropomorphism.

Chapter LXIV

"The exposition of the best means of acquiring Gnosis (al-ma'rifah)".

Perhaps the best that a student of such problems referred to above could do is that he should avoid over-memorizing those terms mentioned in the different books because to over-memorize them will only confuse him.

The search for reality from transmitted metaphorical, equivocal and doubtful terms is an extremely difficult venture. Thus the student must needs restrict himself to few words which he picks from scholars and from books of authoritative successors and not from the predecessors. When he has memorized them he should then divert his attention entirely to the constant meditation of them. Thereafter he should abandon perusing old books until his teacher refers them to him.

Chapter LXV

"Continuation of the preceding chapter".

When those in search of the Truth have memorized what is possible for them to understand they must needs ponder carefully about what they have memorized from those problems and must as much as possible associate with distinguished scholars whenever they find them and get engaged in their services. Also they must give them accounts of all thoughts that occur to them concerning those problems. They should seek assistance in perceiving those realities by purifying their hearts, haply so they will perceive them by themselves. The perfect man who has arrived at the ultimate goal has no power to carry any seeker (al-Tālib) through to his sweet water-place (mashrabahu al-'adhb) unless he (the seeker) is capable of reaching it (the ultimate goal) by himself; the only thing he can do is to guide him in the manner and rules of devotion (al-sulūk). If he follows his instruction about the guidance he will generally not be deprived of reaching the ultimate goal if he is one of those destined to reach it.

Chapter LXVI

"The best help for the purification of the heart is to associate with the mystics."

To be in the company of the people of taste (the mystics) , to associate with them and to serve them from the bottom of one's heart, are excellent help for the one who is in search of purifying his heart. By the people of taste I mean those people who have purified their hearts from vicious morals until much of God's grace, which is impossible to express in words, has overflowed them; they are the people whose associates will never be distressed with them. It is very rare not to find them at any place (that is, they are everywhere).

Chapter LXVII

"The ultimate happiness of the disciple."

The real happiness of the disciple is to devote himself with all his spirit and heart to the service of one of those who have already reached the ultimate goal, who have been annihilated in God and who are in contemplation of Him. Thus, if he spends his life in his service, God will re-animate him in a comfortable life, which the scholars know nothing about except the form (picture) and the name. However, as far as the reality of its concepts and its essence (musammāhā) are concerned, they are not available to any one except those people who are gradually fed from the milk of divine grace under divine guidance.

Chapter LXVIII

"The benefits derived from serving the
Ṣūfī shaykh".

If the sempiternal grace had not held my hand and guided me into the service of one of the great Ṣūfī shaykh¹, it would have been inconceivable that I could have been rid of those errors which have been deeply rooted in my heart as a result of my involvement with rational knowledge, nor would I have also benefited from serving the shaykh, al-Imām Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, may God be pleased with him. Because had it not been for my close attachment to the door-step of that shaykh, there would have been gradually piled up in my heart some objectionable attributes which are really impossible to get rid of, as I witness in the case of most of those who are imprisoned by fate in the confines of rational knowledge and reason, whose bladder (hawṣalatuhu) is too narrow to accommodate belief in any thing beyond observable things, let alone the ambiguous hidden things. God Almighty is the one to be praised for bestowing on me abundance of grace which I cannot count and which I do not deserve. On Him I depend and in Him lies my trust and hope to fulfill those blessings.

Chapter LXIX

"The distinction between a perfect Ṣūfī shaykh
 and a shaykh who claims perfection".

Perhaps you would ask: how can a disciple discover such a shaykh? How will it be possible for a beginner

to follow up and know a perfect (al-muntahi) shaykh? A novice should not estimate those who have arrived at the ultimate goal by his own reasoning, neither should he imitate any one merely because of the person's claims. How can he know, for example, such or such a person is a pretender and that there is no base for his claim, or that he is a perfect man who has reached the ultimate goal and who has reached a standard where he can be followed? You should know that this is a problem the answer to which no one can successfully find because every disciple is destined by the causes of what is decreed for him to such an extent that he would find no way out of them (the causes). Every disciple is gripped by the quest in the same manner that his fortune is decreed for him to an extent that he will find it very easy to get someone who guides him onto the right way. Since the quest of a disciple and his guide are given to him in the same manner that his knowledge was decreed to him in sempiternity, it is also the same here without any difference.

Chapter LXX

"Continuation of the preceding chapter."

If you ask whether there is any sign by which a pretender can be distinguished from the true person, who has reached (the ultimate goal), I would say that the signs are very many, but very difficult to explain; and it is highly impossible to understand all of them. As for a sign which includes both the thesis and the anti-thesis, it is almost impossible to find. Moreover, I have no knowledge

of its possible existence. You should strive hard in your quest, for this will solve all your problems and will hold you by the arm and guide you in any dismal quandary; it will rescue you from every terrible mishap, and save you from every catastrophic disaster. He who has not "tasted" would not know; he who has not experienced would never benefit from the experience of others; he who has not eaten would not be satisfied by conversing with the one who has eaten, and he who has not drunk his thirst will not be quenched by the speech of the one who has drunk.

Chapter LXXI

"The conceit of the 'Ulamā' and their contempt for submission to the leadership of the people of gnosis."

Be careful not to be deluded by your knowledge, to get engaged in Ṣūfī devotion without having a leader to lead you in the path. If you do aught you will go astray without realizing it, and you will be like the artisan who is very skillful in his craft, who pre-occupies himself with the study of rational knowledge, and tries to acquire it by himself, disdaining to follow any speculative scholar while having no basis for his refusal, except vanity which is the result of his skill in his craft.

Among the errors which predominate the people of speculative knowledge is that when they intend to embark on a mystical path, they believe that they can dispense with

the one who knows the perils of the road and who can guide them in every step; it is very rare to see any speculative thinker or a scholar who is not without this vanity, which is the result of their disdain of following the mystics; because it is very improbable for a scholar who sees perfection in his scholarly achievement to recognize another person who is ignorant in his field as superior to him. This, however, is due to his mistaken presumption that the real perfection is to be found only in those matters he has already learnt; thus he will not know anything beyond that.

I swear by God other than whom there is no god but Him; I swear a true and an honourable oath that even if a scholar is dedicated to the service of a ṣūfī shaykh, so long as he differentiates himself from the ignorant among his companions in respect to their need of both himself and them to the shaykh, he is still wasting his time and he does not aim at his goal. You will in no way understand these concepts unless you become one of those who belong to them by experience; if you think that you will arrive at these concepts before having the experience, you are still an object of laughter for the satān. The following verse is said about people like you:

When the satān saw his head,
It greeted him and said;
I redeem one who will not be safe.

Chapter LXXII

"The priority of God to existent things is not temporal, rather it is a priority of level and Essence."

You should know that these chapters which are inserted in this discussion are of great benefit, but only to a limited number of people. Those who are self-conceited by their intellect and knowledge will not be impressed by them, and thus will not benefit from them; therefore, since the mention of these chapters is only accidental, it is better that I confine myself to what I have already mentioned and say: It is obvious that the statement that the world is eternal in time is sheer foolishness; and its construction is totally wrong. However, the opponent might say afterwards, "suppose I were to believe that claim in respect to the Heaven and the Earth, then what would you say about the first existent thing? Was its existence simultaneous with the existence of the creator, the Almighty"? If you say yes, you will establish an eternal aparte ante with Him and if you say no, then let us suppose a discussion about it and say: If it (the first existent thing) were non-existent and then it was brought into existence, why did it not exist before that time while the cause in its entirety was already existent? Also, when it came into existence was there a cause for it or not? If you say no, this would be impossible because this would necessitate the happening of a contingent without a cause; and if you say yes, then there appears a cause; then one would say that the appearance of a non-existent cause which continued in non-existence in the same manner and thereafter its existence appears is impossible, because its appearance in the essence of the Necessary Being is impossible; and there is no existent thing whose existence can be established as a condition (for a thing) except the Necessary

Being as you yourself have said in respect to an existent thing which was brought into existence from non-existence.

You should know that "before" and "after" came into existence after the existence of time. There was nothing at that time except the priority of the essence and that of the level. Even our statement "at that time" is equivocal because it implies the existence of time. The priority of level and the essence between the Necessary Being by Himself and the existent things, which are originated from Him have no limit or end. Thus, no statement is more correct than our own that God has been in existence prior to the first existent thing, in an infinite priority; perhaps the reality of the statement of the Prophet, may God bestow peace and blessing upon him, will now be clear to you: "God created the spirits two million years before He created the bodies." The reason why he estimated that priority by a limited period of time is a great secret. The way from every possible thing to every possible thing is finite whereas the way from every possible thing to the Necessary Being is infinite. Otherwise it would have been necessary for a finite thing to be more than an infinite thing; and this is impossible. These questions belong to the primary knowledge (al-awwaliyāt) which are perceived by the eye of gnosis, and the way to perceive it is closed to the eye of the intellect. One should never hope to perceive it through the rational knowledge and the method derived from it.

Chapter LXXIII

"Nothing exists with God nor does anything exist without Him".

It is therefore realized from this that there is no existent thing in existence whose existence is simultaneous with the existence of the Necessary Being; furthermore, the existence of such a thing is inconceivable. Neither the existence of the first existent thing nor the existence of others is simultaneous with the existence of the Necessary Being. Nevertheless the existence of the Necessary Being is musāwīq with the existence of every thing. His simultaneity with what is yet to exist when it comes into existence is like His simultaneity with the first existent thing without any difference (in time). This is the right answer. You should know that when a mystic looks into things with the eye of Gnosis he perceives the correct meaning of our statement that the existence of the Necessary Being is simultaneous with the existence of every existent thing; but reason and knowledge are very much affected by their inability to perceive this fact.

At this point a gnostic would say that God exists along with everything, yet His existence is prior to everything, a priority which has no limit. He will also say that there is nothing in existence which either exists with God or after (without) God, and also that nothing with such an attribute can be imagined to exist. Be careful not to refute our statement that nothing exists with God or after God, lest you will be like a blind man who neither perceives colours nor believes in their existence.

This is real and true; and it is even clearer and more obvious to the eye of gnosis than the primary knowledge is to the intellect. You should know that the intellect may perceive a correct meaning of our statement that God is simultaneous with every thing and yet He is prior to everything; but that meaning is entirely different from what is perceived by the eye of gnosis. As for our statement that nothing exists with God nor does anything exist after Him, it is one of those things whose meanings are not in any way possible for the intellect to perceive. Any exaggeration (excess) in explaining these problems will only make them more difficult for the reason to understand; it is therefore better to be precise and to be confined to the few explanations already mentioned. A student should contemplate the following chapter because it is like a seed to that which has preceded it; thus he may some day pluck its fruit.

Chapter LXXIV

"The proximity (al-qurb) and the distance (al-bu'd) are divided into three categories: sensory (al-hissī), intellectual (al-'aqlī) and spiritual (al-rūbī)."

Proximity and the distance are in three categories; the first category is to be found in time and space, as one may say that the moon is nearer to us than the sun, and that the time of the Prophet, may God bestow blessing and peace on him, is nearer to our time than the time of Adam, may God bestow blessing and peace upon him.

The second category is intellectual proximity; with the availability of this proximity the importance of the proximity of time and space will be negated; thus, one may say that al-Shāfi'ī, for example, is nearer to the greatest believer, Abū Bakr, than Abū Jahl, even though he (Abū Bakr) is nearer to Abū Jahl in time and space than al-Shāfi'ī. Any two things, one of which is described as being near to or far from the other in respect of time and space, are in no way possible to be described with intellectual proximity or distance, except when similar terms are employed and linguistic usage are expanded, because it is not right to say that the concept by which al-Shāfi'ī was nearer to Abū Bakr than others is his proximity to the Heavens and the Earth or his distance from them; because such a concept is not among those over which Heaven or Earth extends. Thence, you must needs understand that none of those things described by the proximity of time and space has any relation to God Almighty insofar as proximity and distance are concerned. For this reason the Prophet said, narrating from his Lord: "Neither my heaven nor my earth can comprise me, but the heart of my servant, the humble and gentle believer, does comprise me".

The third category is the proximity which the mystics perceive and which is in no way possible for the scholars to perceive. Of the rules acquired from this gnosis is the statement of a mystic that the nearness of God Almighty to all things is the same; and there is no difference whatsoever in it. The relation of bodies and spirit to Him are equal and the same. So, we say that

the existence of God is simultaneous with the existence of every existent thing; there is no difference whatsoever in God's simultaneity with existent things. You should know that what we have described concerning proximity and distance in the first category is correct in relation to the sense of vision and that what we described in the second category is correct in relation to the insight (vision) of the intellect, and that what we described in the third category is correct in relation to the intuition (insight) of a mystic. What is in the second category is the knowledge of certitude and what is in the third category is of the essence of certitude; as for real (absolute) certitude I have not yet reached it nor have I discovered it on my way; yet I believe in it in the same manner the blind man believes in colours! As it is impossible for the one who only believes in tangible things to perceive the concept of the proximity and distance which are referred to in the second category so also it is impossible for the one who believes only in intellectual knowledge to perceive the reality of the proximity and the distance referred to in the third category. You should strive hard to believe it in the same manner you believe in the existence of the unseen world (al-ghayb). "Haply God may bring about some new situation then after" (65.1).

Chapter LXXV

"The reality of the day of Judgement."

Perhaps you would exclaim: How far are you still from your statement that these chapters comprise the

knowledge of God and His attributes, of His Prophet and of the Last Day? You have dwelt too much on the discussion of the knowledge of God, His attributes and the stage beyond the intellect; on which depends the belief in prophecy? As for the knowledge of the Last Day you did not treat it in any manner, nor did you write a chapter concerning its meaning; why is it that you have not yet discussed anything about the states of the soul and the reality of its stages in the realms of both material and spiritual world (al-mulk wa al-malakūt).

First of all you should know that the Last Day is not like these days of ours, which are recognised by the rising of the sun; because the sun (itself) will be rolled up on the day of judgement. It is only expressed as "Last Day" owing to the limitation of the expression; as the Prophet has explained when he said: "Verily, time has turned around (changed) and become like the day on which God created Heaven and Earth"¹ and as it is also expressed in the Qur'ān where it is said: "Your Lord is God who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days" (7.58). Unless the Earth is changed to something other than the Earth and the Heavens into something else, it will be impossible for a traveller (al-sālik) to arrive at the day of judgement. If you understand that, you should know that the human soul has many stages which are almost beyond limit and confinement. So long as the soul is in some particular stages one would say that the soul is in this world; and so long as the soul is in some other particular stages one would say that it is in the graveyard; the grave is the first post of the Hereafter; as

long as it is in some other particular stages it would be said that it is in the courtyard of the day of judgement and as long as it is in other particular stages it would be said that it is in the Hereafter.

Chapter LXXVI

"The prior existence of the soul to the body and the soul's immortality after separating from the body".

You should know that the human intellect does not perceive anything concerning the reality of the soul except what is necessary to exist when one contemplates on the body and its accidents, such as its being able to perceive and its being the "agent" of movement (muharikah); all animals share these two attributes. As for what is perceptible about its permanence after its activity in the body has ceased this is only known through speculating in the scientific understanding (al-idrāk al-‘ilmī), in the sense that soul is the locus of knowledge and that knowledge is indivisible; thus the divisibility of its locus is therefore inconceivable, and any thing like it will in no way be annihilated. As for the scholars' judgement that it (the soul) existed before the body, no one has ever established a clear proof for it, (a proof) which is not open to ambiguity and doubt. The scholars' inability to explain this problem is due to the limitation of the terminology in explaining the true meaning of that motion. As for their judgement that the soul came into existence with the body and that the

body was the condition for its existence which comes from the cause that necessitates existence (itself), it is wrong. Indeed the change of its state when separated from the body is well known.

The truth is that the soul came into existence before the body. To me, this is very clear; but it is not possible for me to explain it in a manner which will make it no longer open to any possibility of doubt or opposition. To me it is most probable that any one who perceives this will be in the same position of being unable to explain what he has perceived. I did not acquire my belief concerning the soul solely by speculating on the intellectual proof and logical premises; but the intellectual approach has helped me greatly with the premises referred to in the books of speculative scholars. The only explanation with which this gleam can be adorned is to say that the cause of the existence of the soul existed with its perfect causality before the existence of the body; thus both the cause and the effect existed simultaneously. Indeed the activity of the soul in the body is dependent on the existence of special conditions; it does not exist except after the existence of those conditions.

Chapter LXXVII

"Continuation of the preceding chapter".

It is known that the soul is originated (hādithah) and that it remains forever after death; but this is only because its cause also remains forever and ever

(eternal Aparte Post). If you attain the real knowledge of the existence of its cause prior to the existence of the body, you will necessarily know about its being in existence before the existence of the body; the existence of its cause before that of the body is obvious according to rational knowledge except that the perfection of the causality (as far as rational knowledge is concerned) is an inconclusive, imagined notion. This is the extent of what I have attained by experience, not through the use of rational knowledge. You should know that if the existence of the soul is not to be conceived from the cause which necessitates its existence but from the condition of its activity in the body, it will be necessary for it to be annihilated after its activity in the body has ceased.

Chapter LXXVIII

"The priority of the existence of spirit to the existence of bodies".

You should know that the Majesty of God Almighty - glory be to Him - is more exalted and far from being extended over by the depth of time and space, and this itself is the rule of the spirit; they are not bodies till time and space can be large enough to encompass them. Since the problem is as such, the Lord of the predecessors (al-awwalūn) and the successors (al-ākhirūn) had ruled that God Almighty is prior to the world of time and space, a priority which, when estimated by a period of time, will be infinite. As for the spirits, he (the Prophet) has estimated their priority to the body by a period of two

million years. I perceived this priority by the grace of God and His blessing in a manner which is stronger and clearer than that in which the intellect perceives the primary knowledge. As for the estimation of that priority by the period already mentioned excluding all other periods, its reality is yet to be perceived. May God Almighty prepare our heart (al-bāṭin) to perceive it through His blessing and His grace, and count us among those who deserve that by His sempiternal grace.

Chapter LXXIX

"The cause of the differences among souls".

Perhaps you would now desire to know the cause which necessitates the existence of the soul. You should know that the truth which can in no way be doubted by the "people of heart" (arbāb al-qulūb , that is, the mystics), who are exclusively endowed with some visions which perceive gnosis that the intellect is necessarily incapable of perceiving, is that souls are different such that the levels of their differences are beyond limit, and that this difference is not like the difference of species, nor is it like the difference of genera; rather the difference of souls is beyond all these. Of the souls are those which have no intermediary between them and the Truth, the First (that is, God); this is a problem which both knowledge and intellect are incapable of perceiving; thus you will see that a pedantic on hearing this says promptly: "How can this be conceivable when the various changes of the soul are well known? God Almighty is

above the occurrence of any change in Him. How would it be possible that God Himself without any intermediary be the cause of some souls"? Referring to this idea the Qur'ān says: "O Iblis¹, what prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with my hands?" (38.75); and to this the Prophet referred when he said: "God created Adam in the form of the Compassionate² (that is, God)", and when he said "God never created any thing more similar to Him than Adam". Perhaps if you really perceive the existence of God to such an extent that He would encompass all times, the past and the future in equal manner, you will sense some of the flavours of that reality.

The discussion about such souls is not permissible nor is it also attainable to any one. Why should it be otherwise, since what we mentioned is the least of the rules of souls and the ears of intellects will reject them and then become far away from understanding them. Thus, turning away from this and mentioning what is acceptable to all intellects is better. You should know that except for a few there are many intermediaries between the existence of souls and the existence of the First Being. None can understand the number of the intermediaries in each soul except God's knowledge or the one whom He has prepared for that. All these souls are common in being caused by some spiritual hidden cause.

Chapter LXXX

The cause of the soul's attraction to the body".

Each body is specially designed for a particular soul, because every soul is distinguished by a characteristic sifah which necessitates that distinction, in addition to the existence of other conditions which are connected with the celestial motions.¹ Words alone are not enough to explain the reality of that sifah with which every soul is distinguished, nor are they enough to explain all those other conditions. Perhaps, there are only a few people whose knowledge can possibly comprehend this. I do not mean the knowledge which is acquired through learning because its acquisition through that is almost impossible. Perhaps the attraction of every soul to its special body is like the attraction of iron to the magnet and the attraction of gold to quick-silver or the attraction of bodies to special spaces. To the gnostics there is nothing ambiguous about these. If the intellect is incapable of perceiving the reality of the ma'nā by which iron is attracted to the magnet, despite the fact that it is tangible and visible to all rational beings, why then should there be any wonder if the intellect is proved incapable of perceiving the correlations existing between spirits and bodies which are undefinable, unlimited and uncountable? You should know certainly that the gnostic does not in any way think of the attraction of each soul to its body as impossible. Just like intelligent people, they do not regard the attraction of bodies to special spaces as impossible.

Chapter LXXXI

"The Diversity of God's Knowledge is according to the varieties in the source of souls".

Just as each body occupies a special space, and in it exists an entity which moves it to its space and does not stop it somewhere else, likewise every soul comes out of a special source; thus the difference between souls is due to the difference in their sources. People are sources like the sources of gold and silver, as it is stated by the master Prophet, may God bless him and bestow peace upon him: "God created in every soul a special ma'nā which causes it to move to its original source, and which will never stop it somewhere else". This is an obvious truth which can never be doubted by a gnostic; it is such a ma'nā that the Qur'ān referred to it when it says: "All people knew their drinking place" (2.60). The movement of limbs are effects (āthār) of those ma'nā which the sempiternal power has filled ¹in the soul as a perfection of His wisdom and a demonstration of the perfection of His grace and experience. The souls which have no intermediary between them and the First Being would naturally be attracted to Him just as iron is attracted to the magnet, and these are the souls which really know God. The statement of God that "The people whom He will love and who will love Him" (5.53) is an allusion to the gnostics (who know God without any intermediary).

Those who have known Him only know Him by the real knowledge because He made Himself known to them

directly through His theophany (tajallīh) without any intermediary; thus they were entirely submerged in His knowledge; and His statement: "Am I not your Lord?" (7.171) is an expression of His making Himself known and His theophany to them, and their statement "yes" is an expression of their being submerged in the testimony (contemplation) of His beauty. May God bestow His mercy on the shaykh of Islām, 'Abdallāh al-Anṣārī who clearly explained this concept when he said in one of his statements: "God wanted to be known in spite of the impossibility of His description and the sublimity of His might. Thus, He made Himself known and so He was known, not by a knowledge by which He can be described, nor by a cause by which He can be referred to, nor by an attribute with which He can be defined, but by a knowledge which, occurring with a force, necessitated a union (jam') without leaving any mark, but rather it becomes negation in so far as form is concerned; but in reality He stands as real. O, Lord, you have been gracious to your friends; thus they know you. Had you been gracious to your enemies they would never have denied you".

This is the rule for the souls which have no intermediary between them and the First Being; they know Him by real knowledge because He made Himself known to them without any veil. As for the souls which have an intermediary between them and the First Being, He only made Himself known to them from behind the veil; thus their knowledge is less than the gnosis of those chosen persons in the first rank.

Chapter LXXXII

"The absorption of the figurative essence of the "writer" in His real essence".

When I reached this chapter the glory of the sempiternal Majesty shined on me; thus intellect and knowledge vanished and the "writer" was annihilated (lit. he remained without himself), may, he was covered by His real Heness (huwiiyyatuhu). So his figurative essence was absorbed in Him. When the beauty of sempiternity returned his intellect his knowledge and his soul to him, his tongue started stammering, repeating the verse of the poet:

What happened happened,
The nature of this I cannot describe;
But you should consider it good,
And ask not about it.

Chapter LXXXIII

" A lover's yearning for his home of origin".

As his eyes^{were} filled with tears and his heart gaped up to his throat, the lover was tormented by his love, and his grief was intensified so, he said: How long is this fruitless raving going to continue and how can this mentioning of the beloved be of any use while the lover is still imprisoned in the cell of separation? When the poor man (al-miskīn) was smitten by the intensity of fear, and his return to his original home was guaranteed then his pen remains without a writer (that is, the writer was annihilated).

Chapter LXXIV

" Standing in the presence of His Majesty God".

The writer received a final order from the Glorious "Sultān" that he should enter into His court; thus did the bird fly to its nest where it originated and abandoned its cage. Then while in the presence of the Sultān something happened which is impossible to describe; when He ordered him to leave, he asked permission from Him to narrate his experience to the travellers who are still in the depth of space and time; thus He granted him permission for that. When he returned to his place in the prison he re-examined what he was concerned with (his intention) and wrote these chapters which comprise a narration of his experience and what happened to him.

Chapter LXXXV

"The Light of Gnosis".

If ever it occurs to your mind to ask the Ṣūfī what happens, you will then be called upon from behind the veils of the unseen world and be told to behave yourself: how can a blind man question the reality of colour? I swear by the controller of the material and the spiritual world, under whose might are the realm of greatness (al-ʿaẓamūt) and that of omnipotence (al-jabarūt), that if a mote of what happened between us were to appear in this world of yours the "Throne" and the "Chair" would be annihilated, let alone the Heavens and the Earth.

Chapter LXXXVI

"To experience gnosis it is necessary
to turn away from this world".

One must be cautious not to be consumed with the desire of understanding these ma'nī through these terms lest he employ his superficial intellect and defective mind in dealing with these ma'nī. Accept this freely given advice from me, even though I do not expect you to, because your excuse concerning this is quite obvious to me. For by practising speculative knowledge I have experienced wonders which have led me not to be surprised by this attitude of yours or of other speculative scholars. Indeed should you wish to arrive at the reality of these ma'nī by experience, you must need abandon this unclean world together with all its filths for those interested who are directed to it by their base aspirations. As far as the world to come is concerned, you must not have a wrong approach towards it. What a great shame and disgrace that a lover should give up his pursuit without reaching his beloved! Upon my life, "among you are some who desire this world and some others who desire the Hereafter" (3.152). But how far you still are from those people who have thrown both these worlds behind their backs. Thus has the Qur'ān praised them saying: "They aim at His face" (6.52). If you do that, the sempiternal generosity and eternal grace will grant you a heart which desires nothing in the Heavens or on the Earth; and nothing will quench the burning desire in your heart except the beauty of sempiternity, which is the water of life itself.

Chapter LXXXVII

"The noblest of the souls is that which by nature yearns towards God".

How accurate is the proverb that: Discussion leads to another discussion! The discussion of souls and their states has led us to worlds of countless wonders and oceans of valuable gems. Let us now return to our main objective and strive hard to explain it thus: since a body that moves by nature to a special space must move to it in the shortest possible distance in a straight line, in which no obliqueness is in any way conceivable, which fact is definitely known through certain proofs, and well known to those who examine similar problems, likewise each one of these souls moves to its original space which is the source where it comes from, within the shortest distance. Thus you should never pay attention to any obstacle which hinders them (the souls) from being attracted; because that does not affect our objective that the most noble soul then is that which moves by nature without any effort (takalluf) in the right course, which is the nearest path to God. If fate impedes some souls in their course, that would be outside their original nature, and thus they should be ignored.

So long as these people are on the right path, you will find them frequently repeating His words: "Guide us on the right path" (1.6). As He informed us in the Qur'ān concerning al-khalīl, that is Abraham, specially quoting him as saying "I will go to my Lord! He will

surely guide me" (37.99). You should not doubt that if a magnet attracts iron to itself from the shortest possible distance it is guided on the right path. Thus, since these souls are most noble, God said of them "Who can be better in religion than one who submits himself to God, does good and follows the way of Abraham, the true in faith, for God did take Abraham for a friend" (4.125).

Chapter LXXXVIII

"Terms that derived from (applicable to) the material world are incapable of proving the realities of the unseen world".

The meanings expressed by these terms are quite different from their outward connotation; they have really been set forth to demonstrate concepts other than those concepts expressed by them here. As soon as one hears them their special meaning must of necessity occur first to his mind. Only a few erudite scholars who search in the real knowledge will get the first sense (literally, will smell the sources) of their flavour. My excuse concerning this is obvious: should a person want to make a blind man understand how to perceive colour or to instruct an impotent male the real enjoyment of sexual intercourse, he will no doubt explain things to him so that he may understand them in the same manner that he perceives other things by the senses; however, such understanding does not apply to the objects of taste, smell and hearing nor do they apply to things which are perceived by the intellect. This is difficult for a

blind man to believe. Even if he testifies verbally and says: "I certainly believe that", we should know that his confession is a belief in the unseen world and that his belief must be composed of false imagination stuffed in his brain. Likewise, if one says to us that there are in the hereafter matters which are neither applicable to tangible nor to rational objects, it will be difficult for us to believe him; we can only believe it in the same manner we believe in the unseen world, just like the belief of a blind man in colours, until we arrive at it by experience. For this reason I realize that it is better to confine myself to the mention of the states of the souls and their stages; perhaps the few explanation I gave should better be abandoned, because most people will view it as very unlikely and reject it, and by rejecting it they will definitely be harmed.

Chapter LXXXIX

"The Intellect is incapable of perceiving matters concerning the Hereafter".

With your feeble mind you may hasten to refute our statement that the affairs of the hereafter are neither applicable to tangible nor to conceivable things, and say that the best proof of the falsity of this statement is the judgement of the intellect in a certain strict sense that existent things are divided into conceivable and tangible things; if the affairs of the hereafter are existent things how can a person be permitted to say that they do not apply either to conceivable or to tangible

things? Now do be patient enough until I explain the point of the defect in this view; thereafter you have to re-examine your mind (nafsuka) sincerely so that ignorance of what you hear will not have a grip on you.

You should know that to a blind man also all existent things are confined to tangible and conceivable things just as they are also confined to him in many other aspects, such as their being confined to what is eternal and what is originated, to the cause and effect, and to perfection and imperfection; yet if one says to him that colours apply neither to conceivable nor to tangible things, this proposition (statement) will be true. By a tangible thing we mean what he perceives through the four senses. A blind man may deny it and say that if existence with its entirety is confined in conceivable and tangible things, how can it be possible to establish that the colours are neither tangible nor conceivable despite the fact that they are existent things? His refutation of this view is baseless; except that he has confined¹ all tangible things to the objects of the four senses.

Likewise, if we say that the affairs of the Hereafter do not apply either to tangible or to conceivable things and realize that the deniers (al-jāhidūn)² have refuted it their denial will definitely be baseless except that they confined all tangible things to the perception of the five senses; and that is not really necessary. To confine all existent things to what is perceived only through the sense and the intellect is also not necessary.

How many things are those which the intellect proves incapable of perceiving? The intellect becomes like imagination when it fails to perceive many pure and difficult intelligible objects. This does not prove that all that imagination perceives is untrue. Likewise, sight perceives tangible things and its judgement on them is divided into truthful (al-sādiq) and wrong (al-kādhīb); its judgement for example, that the measure (size) of this part is this, is a correct judgement; and its judgement that the size of the sun is like the size of a shield, and that the size of planets is like that of dinars is a false judgement. It has no basis except that some thing that is far away cannot be perceived in the same manner that something nearby can be perceived.

Likewise, you should certainly know that the judgement of the intellect that God Almighty is existent, is One, is eternal aparte ante, and is the creator is definitely a truthful judgement. But its judgement that it (the intellect) must perceive every existent thing such as the Hereafter, is certainly a false judgement. You should know afterwards that God Almighty is farther from the insight of the intellect than the sun is from the vision of the sense-perception in an unlimited level. Owing to His remoteness and His perfect luminosity it is impossible for the intellect to perceive Him. The insight of the intellect in relation to the perception of God, is like a bat in relation to the perception of the light of the sun. (Whereas) the insight of the gnostic in relation to the perception of God is like a human being in relation to the perception of the sun's

disc; for wherever the sun exists the existence of the bat will not be conceivable, nor will it be that of human being, in so far as their reality is concerned.

Chapter XC

"A person ought to believe in the mystery of the Hereafter in the same manner the blind man believes in colours".

It is true and beyond doubt that the knowledge of the Hour (al-sā'ah) rests with God, praise be to Him. As He says "To Him is reserved (remitted) the knowledge of the Hour" (41.47). You cannot believe in any mystery of the Hour except in the manner the blind man believes in colours. You should first of all contemplate on how the blind man, when he believes in colours through invisible means, must needs take his mind off the four senses and their perceptions, so that his belief in the unseen world can be possible, without using any similitude or drawing any example; then you should ask your soul to hold such a belief until you become a true believer of the unseen world, and become sure of the existence of the Hereafter as God says "Those who believe in the unseen, who perform the prayer and expend of what We have provided them with, and who believe in what has been sent to thee and what has been sent down before thee, and who have faith in the Hereafter" (2.3-4). If you do not find your soul endowed with such belief you should certainly know that the devil has trapped you and deceived you by the rope of his vanity (ḥabl ghurūrih).

Chapter XCI

"The conditions necessary for the opening of the eye of intuition".

If you are a seeker after the truth you should contemplate deeply on what I have explained to you about the condition of belief in the unseen world and think of it constantly until belief itself becomes your nature to such an extent that with it you will not need any premises; at this stage your heart is much more prepared to receive light from God which will produce relief in your chest and expansion in your bladder (si'ah fī ḥawṣalatika) as God says: "Is he then whose heart God hath opened to Islām and who is in light from his Lord" (39.22). When your heart is opened to the belief in the unseen world and a light whose likeness you have never seen before flows onto your heart you should know that this is one of the signs of the stage which appears beyond the stage of the intellect. You should strive hard in your search, for it will suit your mystical encounter. He who seeks after his objective diligently will definitely achieve it. God inspired David - peace be upon him - by saying "O David, whoever seeks after Me will reach Me, but whoever seeks after other than Me will not find Me"¹ From this it becomes necessary by deduction to conclude that whoever searches for Him cannot be imagined as seeking for other than Him. Such statements are those referred to by the Prophet when he said, "Whoever knocks continuously on a door, the door will eventually be opened to him"²

Chapter XCII

"The intellection of the stage beyond the intellect".

The understandings (mudrakāt) of this stage are somehow classified into those things whose relation to it is like the relation of the primary knowledge to the intellect, and those whose relation to it is like the relation of speculative problems (al-ghawāmiḍ al-naẓariyyah) to the intellect; which problems can only be perceived indirectly through the deduction of the intellect; this proposition is very difficult to understand as well as extremely hard to come by; therefore you should not hope (lā taṭma') to arrive at it; rather you should believe in it in the same manner as you believe in the unseen world, haply so you may reach it through God's mercy; thus, having experienced it you will not need to listen to any explanation concerning it.

Chapter XCIII

"What is to be perceived at this stage is a mystery to the intellect".

What is to be perceived at this stage is a mystery to the knowledge of the age of discretion as well as to the human intellect. Just as what is perceived by sight is a mystery to the sense of smell and what is realized by faculty of imagination and memory, and what is perceived by the sense of touch is hidden to the faculty

of hearing and that of taste; so the primary knowledge is a mystery to all the senses. The reason for this is that openness ('allaniyyah) and secrecy (al-sirr) are two relative things; a thing can be a secret to a viewer (mudrik) and open at the same time to another viewer. In the same way the primary knowledge is obvious to the intellect, yet hidden to the sense-perception. Most of the things which are called secrets in the language of revelation (lisān al-shar') and in ṣūfī tongue is a mystery to both human intellect and to letters and sounds (al-ḥurūf wa al-aṣwāt). anything that cannot be conceived by an expression¹ is a secret to the expression itself; in this context the Prophet, may peace and blessing of God be upon him, said "Whenever fate is mentioned you should refrain from debating on it", that is to say that fate (al-qadr) is a secret to human language and understanding, so it can never be understood by any expression. For this reason Sahl al-Tustarī said, "Any discussion on al-qadar with an opponent (non-mystic) is an innovation."² Be aware of the content of this chapter because you will need it later.

Chapter XCIV

"The affairs of the Hereafter are mystery to human knowledge".

Everything concerning the day of judgement is a mystery to human knowledge; and no one can possibly understand it so long as he exists in this world and is unable to rid himself of the captivity of delusive imagination

and the deceit of fantasy. What the unbelievers said to the effect that "when will this promise come true if you speak truly" (10.48) is a question which is impossible to answer clearly because since the affair of the Hour is like the twinkle of an eye or even faster, while the answer to the question "about when is the time" to those who ask this question will definitely be impossible. It is like the statement of a blind man when after we have described coloured objects to him said, "How can visible objects be tasted or smelt?". The true answer to this is that knowledge of visible objects is a characteristic of a person with sight; were he to imagine any other meaning for what we have described to him by means of comparison, he would of necessity be mistaken. Then the true answer to those unbelievers who question about it, "when will this promise be?" is to answer them that the knowledge of that question remains with God. Whoever returns to God and happens to be summoned to Him will experience that knowledge and will necessarily know the reality of the Hour because he is now with Him. "With Him is the knowledge of the Hour" (43.85); for this reason the day of judgement will not begin while there remains on earth anyone who says "there is no god but Allāh," as the Lord of the predecessors and the successors informed us. Those who are still on the surface of the Earth are not yet summoned to God - praise be to Him. Then who is ever present "in an assembly of truth in the presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent" (54.55), for him the day of judgement has started. Likewise, for the guilty people, even though "they hang their heads low" (32.12), the day of judgement insofar as they are concerned has started, because

they are already with their Lord. Perhaps the one who says: "I will pass the night with my Lord 'who provides me with food and drink' (26.79)" may also correctly say "I was summoned (bu'ithtu) to God when the Hour appeared like these two (referring to his two fingers), and although it has almost preceded me I preceded it instead".

You should know that the day of judgement is within the veils (al-hujub) of the Heavens and the Earth; its position in those confines is like that of an embryo in a mother's womb; for this reason it will not start except "when the Earth is shaken to utmost convulsion (99.1), the sky rendered asunder, the stars scattered, the sun folded up, the mountains are made to pass away, pregnant camels in their tenth month are neglected, and when that which is in the tombs is scattered out, and that which is in the breasts is brought out" (100.9-10); and in short when "the Earth shall be changed to other than the Earth and so will be the Heavens" (14.48). So long as a traveller is outside the veils of the Earth and those of the Heavens the day of judgement will not start for him, because the day of judgement is within the veils and God Himself is there and that the knowledge of the Hour remains with Him only; the statement of the Prophet-peace and blessings of God be upon him-; "The day of judgement will never come while there remains on Earth someone who says lā illāhā illā Allāh" means that so long a man is outside the veils, the day of judgement will remain hidden to his knowledge; but when he breaks, in his travel, through those veils and revels in the Divine presence al-ḥaḍrat al-'indiyyah, the secret of the day of judgement

will be uncovered to him. For this reason no one is even permitted to see God in this world, be he a prophet or a saint. As for the prophet Muhammad - may God bestow His blessing and peace upon him - he saw Him only after he had broken through the veils on the "night journey". When Moses was told "Verily the Hour will come and there is no doubt about it" (22.7), his request to see God was certainly turned down; and God said to him "Thou shalt never see me" (7.143). You should know that the day of judgement was obviously revealed to Muhammad only when he had broken through the veils of the Heavens and the Earth, and passed beyond their zones; thus when he returned to his place on Earth outside the veils, the knowledge of it became a mystery to him again as it was before the night journey. It was only revealed to him behind the veils.

In short, a secret is always secret, insofar as it is a secret; and openness remains always openness insofar as it is openness; they never change unless the conditions of the travellers themselves are changed. To such matters I refer to God's statement "They will question thee concerning the Hour, asking when it will take place. What art thou about to mention it" (79.42). That is to say: even though the mystery of the day of judgement was revealed to you in your night journey what have you still retained of it in your memory and knowledge? Whoever makes use of these terms by means of reason will definitely wrong (harm) himself. Be careful, poor man, and do not allow your mind to attempt to reject this or to doubt about it, otherwise you will disbelieve what God sent down to His prophets. Had it not been

for you and blind people like you, the Prophet would not have been addressed by God's statement, "But thy people have cried; it lies yet it is the truth" (6.66).

Chapter XCV

"Must every rational being in this world reach the stage beyond the intellect?"

Were you to ask the question whether every rational being must reach the stage beyond the intellect just as every little baby must necessarily reach the stage of discretion when the time comes? You ought to know that the stages are many and that every creature must reach the stage which is beyond the intellect, even if this happens after death. But to say that all creatures will reach certain stages which are accessible only to certain people would be impossible; nay, the necessary true answer is that a creature may reach many stages beyond the intellect while still in this world and not yet separated from his body (stripped of the garment of his material form). It is not conceivable that any other creature can reach most of these stages, either in this world or in the Hereafter. This is a definite truth which the mystics see with their eyes, just as a rational being sees that the number ten is greater than the number one. Those who are not destined to reach the stage already referred to generally insist blindly on denying its existence until it becomes clear to them; just as the Qur'ān indicated when it says referring to the unbelievers "Woe to those who disbelieve for the scene of a dreadful day.

How well they will hear and see on the day they come to Us!" (19.37-38). anyone who naturally and without any effort on his part believes in statements such as those that we have narrated must have been endowed with some qualities of the stage beyond the intellect.

Chapter XCVI

"The relation of the intellect to the stage beyond itself".

There is no doubt that any intelligent person would deduce the characteristics of every soul by looking at the body which contains it; just as he can deduce the differences between the souls which function in the bodies of the horse, the donkey, the ape, the camel and that of the human being by looking at each of them.

It will be easy for the intelligent person to realize the difference between bodies which are still under the influence of their souls, and those bodies which are separated from their souls by death. Likewise, you should know for certain that the human intellect in relation to the stage which is beyond the intellect, is like that of the body in relation to the soul; the gnostics who are perfect in al-ma'rifah can deduce the difference of the spirits of the stages hidden in the substance of the intellect in the same manner as the fire is hidden in the stone by (merely) contemplating on these intellects; it is easy for them (the gnostics) to realize the difference between an intellect filled with

various stages, and an intellect in which none of those stages exists, nay, which is like a body from which the function of the soul has been cut off.

Chapter XCVII

"Within the scope of its ability the intellect is a true criterion".

When you are rid of the vain ambition in which the speculative scholars-through their attempt to comprehend the realities of all beings-are engrossed, and become aware of the reality of the Prophet's statement "You should adhere to the religion of an unsophisticated believer ; then you should know that the dawn (subh) of that stage has appeared (that is, you are then entering into the stage beyond the intellect); like a child in the cradle when he reaches a stage where he perceives the rational primary knowledge; one should know that the first light of his intellect has shone. You should know that in their ambition, the speculative scholars are like people who see the scale on which gold weight is balanced and the desire to weigh a mountain, for example, on it; something that is impossible. However, this impossibility does not prove that the scale is not true in its measurement.

You should know that the intellect is a true scale, and that its judgements are certain and true without any doubt; it is a fair judgement wherein no injustice is ever conceivable; nonetheless, should a rational being

desire to balance everything on it including the affairs of the Hereafter, the reality of the prophecy, and those of the sempiternal attributes, that would be an impossible desire on its part. You should know that this desire will gradually vanish when the light of the stage beyond the intellect begins to shine; just as the light of the planets gradually vanishes upon the rise of the sun. There is great difference between a person's abandoning a desire by compulsion and his abandoning it voluntarily. This is a pitfall (mazallat al-qadam) one should guard against. It is, however, not up to a person to decide to abandon this desire any time he may wish; rather his abandonment of this desire depends on the appearance of the light of the stage already referred to; and one must reckon with it, for the disappearance of this desire entirely depends on the illumination of the light of the sun (which is beyond the intellect).

Chapter XCVIII

"Al-ma'rifah implies freeing oneself from the captivity of space and time."

When you reach a stage where your familiarity (unsuka) in understanding the rational difficult problems by means of decisive true proofs decreases so much so that it is analogous to the familiarity that the erudite speculative scholars have in perceiving doubtful propositions, then you may have perhaps reached the point of the dawn (isfār) (in you Şūfī endeavour). Then you must strictly follow the Şūfī path and by chance the

light of the sun may rise up to you. Thus, you will see the beauty of the original creation that is mentioned in the Qur'ān "God's original upon which He originated mankind" (30.30). Then you will be free from the captivity of space and time, and subdue every thing in this filthy material world. At this point you will be rewarded by Divine grace and your journey to God will be a natural process without any effort on your part; as the Prophet said, "The pious members of my community together and I are free from any kind of religious constraint (al-takalluf)."

Chapter XCIX

"The flight to the world of sempiternity."

When you are granted your rectitude of conduct and the trust (al-amānah) which is the prophetic treasure (al-khazānah al-nabawiyah) becomes manifest to you, and you pass beyond the zones of the Heavens and the Earth, and time changes for you and becomes like a day after which there is no other day, then your sun will rise and your past will be jealous of your future¹ and then you will turn towards the originator of the Heavens and Earth; in the presence of the ever-living and self-subsisting Being you will advance to drink the water of life. Now your heart will be pierced in the direction of your Lord and the hole will be the means of your flight to the sempiternal Being and the light of sempiternity will continue to shine over you according to your wish. In the least sign of any illumination one is annihilated,

because it is impossible that a lover should reach his beloved except after his being annihilated; thus you should never think that the arrival to God can endure the jostling (jahmah) of existence. It is impossible to explain this; because it is something beyond the limit of both knowledge and intellect.

Chapter C

The end of the Book.

"The necessary conditions for those people who want to benefit from perusing this book".

I have already written ninety-nine chapters of this book and with this chapter it becomes a hundred. What an excellent provision a student has, if upon embarking on the path of study he achieves his objective and still feels that his high aspiration does not stop him there; but rather he realizes that his purified soul is urging him to seek for what is beyond that. This is the most that I can explain concerning what has been revealed to me after I have finished my studies.

This is the crime of mine
And the exercise of choice on it;
Because every guilty person
Must be responsible for his crime.

The conclusion of these chapters:

You should know that this book is of little benefit except for those who examine the truth seriously and exhaust themselves in the search for it until they are

well invested with it. Then they become dissatisfied with their achievements and find their souls yearning for some thing beyond both the intellect and knowledge. Whoever lacks that yearning in his heart should go through the chapters of this book again and again, by so doing the desire will generally emerge within him. If objectionable matters prevent him from the constant perusal of it, he will never be granted the benefit of this book; the matters which prevent one from this are many and the time is too short to allow their explanation (here) because I am terribly tired. This is my excuse in every chapter which I did not give the thorough elucidation it needs by applying all those premises on which the examination of that chapter depends. I was diverted from that by the very fact that my heart was attracted to what is by far more important than it. Moreover, I dictated these chapters to a group of people who have no need of any premise beyond this; so I condensed the discussion because of these two reasons.

Whoever desires to comprehend thoroughly the realities of what is mentioned in these chapters by mere perusal of this book once or twice or more desires something that is impossible; rather it is necessary for those who peruse these chapters to devote their time both day and night on perusing them constantly and contemplating ~~on~~ them repeatedly until the image of every word in this book is inscribed in their memory. Then what they understand from them will become a seed for the real understanding of them. This does not come about except by much practice, and great endurance in those practices, in the

course of the day and night. So long as the soil of one's heart is not like that of the marshes, these ma'ānī must occur in it in the same way seeds fall into a clean fertile soil, which soon produce fruit if one properly takes care of them by watering them on time and protecting them from defects that occur to things of that nature. He who realizes that he cannot endure that or finds out that he is not in the possession of the qualities already mentioned with regards to the rational knowledge, should refrain **from perusing** this book because every action has its own **men** and each **person** finds what he is destined for quite easily. What a just man is the man who says:

If you cannot do something,
You should leave it and
Proceed to what you can do.

The power of every bird is commensurate with its bladder and "each group of people knows now their drinking place" (2.60). Have you ever seen a garbage man competing with kings over their sovereignties? How preposterous! How preposterous!

Every road a man treads his steps thereon,
Will be commensurate with his feet.

Praise be to God, through whose blessing the good works are accomplished. His knowledge, His power and His wisdom are demonstrated in every mote of existence, and His blessings be upon His Prophet whose light has risen in all horizons which thus become illuminated by his light, Muḥammad the best one of all creatures, who continued on the most appreciated paths, the blessing of God be

upon his family, which is the light of guidance and the source of generosity and protection. The same blessing be upon his Companions, who are like bright stars, and his virtuous purified wives.

upon his family, which is the light of guidance and the source of generosity and protection. The same blessing be upon his Companions, who are like bright stars, and his virtuous purified wives.

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

Preface

1. We are unable to trace the authority of this Ḥadīth.
2. We read: لا يقطع عليهم طريقهم إلى انس بالملكوت الفهم مع عالم الملك
to mean "the understanding of the material world would not prevent them from attaining the intimacy with the spiritual world" instead of the text: لا يقطع عليهم طريقهم إلى انس بالملكوت الفهم مع عالم الملك which means, "the attainment of the intimacy with the spiritual world would not prevent them from understanding the material world", as vocalised by 'Usayrān.
3. Prophet Nūḥ is said to have lived for about a thousand years. The Qur'ān (29.13) puts his age as nine hundred and fifty years by the time of the flood. Bernhard, "Nūḥ", E.I.¹ III, pp. 948-949.
4. Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī (320-375) was a cousin of Sayf al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdānī of Aleppo (d.356) and a very gifted poet. His Dīwān was edited by Sāmī Dahān. Dīwān Abī Firās al-Ḥamdānī, ed. Sāmī Dahān (Bayrūt: 1944), pp. 9-19.
5. Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī (d.390) was a well known poet and a distinguished personality. His Dīwān was edited by Dār Ṣādir in Bayrūt. See Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Dictionary of Learned Men, ed. D.S.Margoliouth, (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1927), Vol. IV, pp. 6-10;

cf. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A'yān, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1948), Vol. IV, pp. 426-28.

Chapter I

1. The word al-zamāhir is probably a typographical error; the correct word should be al-zāhir.
2. We read نَبِيًّا instead of نَبِيَّ as printed in the text; we assume that نَبِيَّ is a typographical error.

Chapter II

1. In an attempt to establish the eternity of God, some scholars (philosophers and theologians) maintain that every existent thing (except God) must be in the state of motion (ḥarakah) or that of rest (sukūn); and since both ḥarakah and sukūn are originated and since every originated thing must need an originator, the originator of the Universe (that is everything other than God) must needs have no originator. Therefore God must be Eternal a parte ante. Al-Ghazālī, al-Iqtisād fī al-I'tiqād, pp. 24, 28, 39; al-Baqillānī, al-Tamhīd, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Khudarī and Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīdah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1947), pp. 42-45. . . .
'Ayn al-Quḍāh holds that this way of proving the eternity of God by means of motion is very long and it needs some unnecessary premises. So the best way

is to establish the Eternity of God by means of existence itself. For the existence is wholly divided into two categories: Created things and Eternal Being. The mystical significance of this thesis of his lies in his belief that wherever God is, nothing else would exist with Him, no motion, no rest, no space, and no time. Because there is nothing in existence but God. Infra, chapter liii.

Chapter V

1. We read حَيْثُ instead of حَيْثُ which is likely a typographical error.

Chapter VIII

1. The philosophers maintain that as long as a thing is possible it is not yet necessary, and as long as a thing is not yet necessary it would not exist; and what is yet to exist is non-existence itself (al-'adam); for this reason possibility becomes equal to non-existence. Al-Ghazālī, Maqāṣid al-Falāsifah, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1961), p. 205; cf. Ibn Sīnā, al-Najāt fī al-Ḥikmah al-Mantiqiyyah wa al-Ṭabī'iyyah wa Ilāhiyyah, (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, 1938), pp. 226-227. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh's position on this problem is not really different from that of the philosophers; for he holds that every existent thing is necessary either by itself such as God or by other than itself; such

as the Universe. Thus he concludes that possibility is an imaginary line which separates necessity and impossibility, but which does not exist in reality; that is, whatever exists is necessary. He goes further to say that since nothing can exist without God, nothing therefore would deserve existence save God, the only self-Subsistence. Supra, Translation chapter VIII; pp. 76f.

Chapter IX

1. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is of the opinion that the creation of the world is a necessary attribute to God. He holds that creation is the true manifestation of His Attributes of Power, Knowledge, and Will, etc., which are necessary to His Essence. According to al-Ghazālī however, the creation of the Universe is possible in respect to God, because if the creation ceases to exist, its absence would not cause any harm or defect to the Essence of God. Al-Ghazālī, Iqtisād, p. 175. The major difference between al-Ghazālī and 'Ayn al-Quḍāh on this problem is that in the opinion of the latter creation does not need a special act of Will, that is, God does not decide to create at one time and not to create at another time, since there is no difference between Will and Power, and for that matter between Will and any other other Attributes. Infra, chapter xxxvi, pp. 77f.

Chapter X

1. We read كل موجود حادث فهو مقدر - every created being

is an object of Power - instead of كل موجود ^ي حادث - every existent being is created, and is an object of Power, - as edited by 'Usayrān. We assume that the word وجد is superfluous and that the vocalization is wrong.

Chapter XI

1. It is a belief of the philosophers that God does not know particulars. Avicenna said that God's knowledge should not be the object of time, otherwise, it would be connected with "past", "present" and "future"; and thus become the object of change. For this reason Avicenna concludes that God does not know particulars otherwise His knowledge of these particulars would have been changed along with the changes that occur in the particulars as time passes. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt, Vol. III-IV, pp. 726-727; Vol. II, p. 79. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh considers this view of the philosophers a gross mistake; he maintains that God knows everything because His knowledge is infinite while existent things are finite. His knowledge therefore must comprehend everything. The failure of the intellect to understand the manner in which God's knowledge comprehends all particulars is due to the limit of the intellect itself and not to the impossibility of that knowledge. Chapters xx, xxi. al-Ghazālī, Tahāfut al-Falāsifah, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī & Co., 1947), Vol. I, pp. 188-202.

Chapter XXVII

1. The love of God is one of the most important elements in the Ṣūfī doctrine; for it is through this love that Ṣūfīs can ever hope to attain the intimacy with God Almighty. In other words, the longing of the soul to return to its origin in the spiritual world is the only way by which mystics attain their ultimate objective. 'Alī Ḥassan 'Abd al-Qādir, The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd, (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1962), pp. 107-116; cf. Margaret Smith, "Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyyah," E.I.¹, Vol. III.2. Al-Ghazālī states that the love for the sake of God is the ultimate goal in Ṣūfī doctrine; all states and ranks in Ṣūfism are only preliminary stages leading to "Love". cf. al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn, (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1939), Vol. IV, pp.286,288. According to Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī Love comes only from the blessing of God. He maintains that he whose love for God is pure would attain all other mystical states. Al-Suhrawardī, 'Awārif al-Ma'ārif (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-'Allamiyyah, 1939), p. 350. Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) maintains that love subsists in the heart but said that is too subtle to be expressed by word. Love, he goes on to say, attracts people towards God and causes them to seek nothing in life but God. Al-Qushayrī, al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah (Cairo: Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣubḥī & Sons, 1948), pp. 144-149. Also 'Ayn al-Qudāh attaches great importance to love; he believes that it is through love and nothing else, that Ṣūfīs are induced to seek God in the same manner that iron is

attracted to the magnet. Supra, chapters xxvi,xxvii; cf. Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d.618 A.H.), Fawā'id al-Jamāl wa Fawā'id al-Jalāl, ed. Fritz Meier (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1958), pp.35, 37, 39.

Chapter XXIX

1. The greatest truthful man was Abū Bakr, the first Caliph in Islām. This statement of his: "the incompetence to understand is understanding in itself" is frequently quoted by mystics. Al-Ghazālī, Maqāsid, p. 252; Ihyā', Vol. IV, p. 297. Al-Hujwīrī (d. 465) quotes al-Junayd as saying: "the noblest saying concerning unification is the word of Abū Bakr referring to this statement of his. Al-Hujwīrī, Kashf al-Mahjūb, trans. R.A.Nicholson, (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1911), p. 284. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh is in full agreement with this statement; for he says that the realization of the incompetence of the intellect to understand the real Tawhīd is prerequisite to the real understanding of Tawhīd. This realization, 'Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains, is beyond the limit of the intellect.
2. We could not trace this Hadīth in the Ṣiḥāh books. Nevertheless, al-Ghazālī had mentioned it in his Ihyā', Vol. IV, p. 297.

Chapter XXXIX

1. Philosophers maintain that necessary Being cannot

be the source of more than one thing; thus the numerous creatures in the world must have emanated from Him in hierarchical manner; and the only thing which emanated from God directly is the first intellect from which other existent things emanated one from the other, until we came to reach the active intellect and the lunar sphere from which originated the Earth, fire, water, and air. Al-Ghazālī, Maqāṣid, pp. 290-92. According to 'Ayn al-Quḍāh this belief of the philosophers is a gross mistake and a plain infidelity. He maintains that all existent things are God's creation; and when considered by themselves only then, one would realize that they have no existence whatsoever, and what does not exist would not be the cause of something else. Infra, chapters 39, 40, 41, 42, and 57.

2. We read فإنَّ المَعْدُومَ لَا يَصِلُ لِسَبَبِيَّةٍ - non-existent thing cannot be the cause of anything else - instead of فإنَّ المَعْدُومَ لَا يَصِلُ لِمُسَبَّبِيَّةٍ - non-existent thing cannot be an effect of any cause - as printed in the text of 'Usayrān. We believe that our reading is more correct and more fitting to the general context here.

Chapter XLVI

1. This Hadīth is sometimes attributed to the Prophet and at other times to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Farūz-anfar, Aḥādīth-i-Mathnawī, (Ṭihrān: 1334), p. 81.

Chapter LI

1. The problem of the eternity of the world came out as a result of the philosophers' claim that all existent things have directly or indirectly emanated from God. They hold that since the Universe has emanated from God, that is to say that God is its direct cause, and since God is eternal Aparte Ante, it follows that the Universe must be eternal also, because an effect cannot be delayed from its cause. Al-Ghazālī, Tahāfut, Vol. I, pp 49-58. 'Ayn al-Qudāh disagrees with this belief and maintains that the philosophers' claim that the Universe is eternal implies that time itself is eternal, and since time was preceded by motion, the eternity of time becomes impossible. The truth is that wherever God exists nothing could exist with Him; thus, besides God the Universe does not have any existence, let alone any eternity. Supra, chapters xxxi, 1, li. Infra, chapters lii, liii.

Chapter LV

1. The problem of "Atomism" in Islām had come out as a result of the Muslim theologians' attempt to establish God's omnipotence and His absolute and exclusive creative power over and against the philosophers' concept of emanation which robs God of His creative power. In an attempt to preserve and protect the absolute creative power of God, the theologians conceive the Universe as consisting of indivisible particles (atoms) and say that it is the combination

of several particles of these atoms that gives rise to the bodies. They believe that these atoms of the bodies are continuously created by God who creates and annihilates them at will. For according to them the atoms cannot endure two instants of time, like the accidents which inhere in them. Explaining this thesis Mājid Fakhry quotes these theologians as saying:

Whenever God creates an atom in which He creates a certain accident, the latter would cease to exist forthwith; whereupon God creates in atom another accident of the same species which ceases to exist forthwith also. The process goes on indefinitely and so long as God wishes.

Mājid Fakhry, Islamic Occasionalism (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958), pp. 26f; cf. al-Bāqillānī, al-Tamhīd, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Khuḍīrī and Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Rīdah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1947), pp. 41-45. 'Ayn al-Quḍāh maintains that the continuation of creatures in existence necessitates the continuation of their relation with their creator; and since this relation is the creation itself, it follows that the creation must continue unceasingly. For this reason every existent thing is being constantly recreated by God Almighty, who endows them with new existence every moment. He concludes, however, that this continuous change in the creation, in accordance with the change in the relation between God and His creatures, can only be perceived through mystical experience, that is, the intellect is completely isolated from understanding it. Infra, chapters lvi, lvii, lviii.

Chapter LVIII

1. Al-Karūbiyūn (Cherubin) are the chiefs and arch-angels: Jibrā'īl, Mikā'īl and Isrāfīl. Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-'Arab (Bayrūt: 1955), Vol. I, p. 714; cf. Stanley Lane-Poole, Arabic-English Lexicon (London: Gilbert and Rivington Ltd., 1885), Vol. 7-8, p. 2603.

Chapter LXI

1. Prophet Mūsā is frequently mentioned in the Qur'ān. His interest in mystical experience is discussed in Qur'ān 18.59-82. Bernhard Heller, "Mūsā," EI¹, Vol. III.2.
2. Al-Khaḍir is a prophet and a popular figure in Islāmic mysticism. Though the name "al-Khaḍir" is not mentioned in the Qur'ān yet all the Qur'ān exegetes agree that al-Khaḍir is the person referred to in the story of Mūsā with a servant of God which is recorded in the Qur'ān 18.59-82. In this story Mūsā was said to have asked al-Khaḍir to accept him as his companion so that he might learn from him the science of "the right path" that is, the guidance to the real knowledge of God. This story is full of mystical symbols; the journey to the meeting of the two seas (Majma' al-Bahrayn) may symbolise the ultimate goal of Ṣūfīs. Mūsā seeking guidance from al-Khaḍir often symbolises a novice seeking the guidance from the Shaykh. This Ṣūfī interpretation might of course have been strongly resented by the

orthodox camp. The reanimated fish in the story reminds us of the soul being refined and turned to be what it was before (pure light) in the Ṣūfī doctrine. 'Alī Ḥasṣan, al-Junayd, pp. 111f; cf. Wensinck, art. al-Khaḍīr, EI¹, Vol. II.2. Many Ṣūfīs regard al-Khaḍīr as a saint who is still alive and who gives them guidance and all necessary instruction concerning their mystical endeavour. Some of them believe that al-Khaḍīr is the leader of all saints. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Umam wa al-Mulūk, ed. D.Goeje (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1964), Vol.I, pp. 415f; cf. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Isābah fī Tamyiz al-Ṣaḥābah (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Sa'ādah, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 429f; Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, Risālah, p. 161.

Chapter LXII

1. Abū Qāsim al-Junayd (d. 297) was a nephew and disciple of Sarī al-Saqāṭī (d.253). He is considered one of the founders of the school of Ṣūfism in Baghdād. al-Qushayrī, al-Risālah, pp. 18f; cf. 'Alī Ḥasṣan, al-Junayd, p. ix. His statement quoted above by 'Ayn al-Quḍāh refers to a general phenomenon in Ṣūfī tradition because of the very fact that what the Ṣūfīs experience is beyond the expression of words; for there is neither a seeing nor a seen in so far as Ṣūfī experience goes. 'Alī Ḥasṣan, al-Junayd, p.110.
2. Abū al-'Abbās b. Surayj (d.335 or 336) was a distinguished Shāfi'ite jurist and a great admonisher of his time. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, Vol. I, p. 51.

Chapter LXIII

1. We read المشيئة الأزلية، والفرق بينهما وبين الإرادة - the sempiternal volition, the difference between it and the Will - instead of المشيئة الأزلية والفرق بينهما وبين الإرادة - the sempiternal volition, the difference between them and the will.

Chapter LXVIII

1. The position of the Shaykh in Islāmic mysticism is remarkably important because it is through the Shaykh that a novice is properly guided onto the right path in his quest for the ultimate goal -the knowledge of God(see note on al-Khaḍir in chapter LXI above). Without the Shaykh the journey of the soul to where it originally belongs will not be possible. For this reason mystics say that he who does not have a mystical Shaykh will reach nowhere in his mystical endeavours. Muḥammad b. al-Munawwar, Asrār al-Tawḥīd, (Ṭihrān:1332 solar HA), pp. 52-53. In this book Ibn Abī al-Khayr quotes Abū Sa'īd Bābū al-Khayr (370-440) as saying that he who does not have a Shaykh is useless and even if he could reach the highest degree in Ṣūfī experience, nothing good would come from him. According to al-Suhrawardī, the importance of the Shaykh lies in the very fact that he is the person who causes people to love God and at the same time makes them the object of love for God. For this reason the position of the Shaykh becomes the highest position in Ṣūfī doctrine.

('Awārif, p. 60). Ṣūfīs frequently quote the Prophet as saying that "the Shaykh amongst his disciples is like the prophet with his people"; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḡhīr (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1954), Vol. II, p. 42. They maintain that he who does not have a Shaykh would not have a religion; instead he would definitely have a devil as his Shaykh; ('Ayn al-Quḍāh, Shakwā, p. 10). 'Ayn al-Quḍāh attaches great importance to the guidance of a Shaykh since without his Shaykh he could not have been saved from the pitfalls of rational knowledge. In his opinion, any failure to comply with the instruction of the Shaykh would result in dismissal of the novice as it happened to Mūsā when he failed to comply with al-Khaḍīr's instructions. Qur'ān, 18.77.

Chapter LXXIV

1. These three terms which are used in the Qur'ān (102.5-6; 56.95; 69.51) were taken over by the mystics to explain three different levels of knowledge, with regard to the knowledge of God. Al-Qushayrī explains the Ṣūfī's interpretation of these terms as follows:

The knowledge of certitude ('ilm al-yaqīn) is the knowledge which is acquired by means of deductive method; and the certitude itself ('ayn al-yaqīn) is acquired by means of manifestation; while the real certitude (ḥaqq al-yaqīn) is perceived through the highest degree of manifestation . . .

'Ilm al-Yaqīn belongs to the people of the intellect (arbāb al-'uqūl) and 'ayn al-yaqīn is for the people of knowledge (aṣḥāb al-'ulūm) while ḥaqq al-yaqīn

is for the Gnostics (ashāb al-ma'ārif). Qushayrī, al-Risālah, p.44. There seems to be a general agreement among the Ṣūfīs that 'ilm al-yaqīn is the rational knowledge, 'ayn al-yaqīn the intuitive knowledge, and ḥaqq al-yaqīn the real arrival at the Divine Presence. Al-Tahānawī explains this by taking an example from the sea and says that to know that the sea exists without seeing it is 'ilm al-yaqīn and to see it from a short distance is 'ayn al-yaqīn, while to plunge into it and drink from its water is ḥaqq al-yaqīn. Tahānawī, Kashf Istīlāḥāt al-Funūn, ed. Al-Mawlawī Muḥammad Wajīh et al (Calcutta: W.N.Lees Press, 1862), Vol. II, p. 1548.

Chapter LXXV

1. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, Vol. II, No. 248, 391.

Chapter LXXIX

1. Iblīs is the name of the Devil. He is mentioned in different ^{parts} of the Qur'ān as rebellious at the creation of Adam (Qur'ān, 2.32, 7.10, 15.31, 17.63). The Qur'ān always describes Iblīs as the enemy of human beings. Wensinck, "Iblīs," EI¹, Vol. II.1, pp. 351-352.

Chapter LXXIII

1. We read كل موجود فهو مساوق الوجود الواجب - the existence of the Necessary Being is ever present

(musāwīq) with every existent being - instead of
 كل موجود فهو مساوٍ الوجود لوجود الواجب -
 every existent being is simultaneous with the existence of the Necessary Being.

Chapter LXXXIX

1. We read حضر المحسوسات - he confines all tangible things - instead of حضر المحسوسات - all tangible things are present.
2. We read الجاهدون - the deniers - instead of الجاهدون - those who do their best.

Chapter XCI

1. Prophet David is frequently mentioned in the Qur'ān and sometimes he is even called the viceroy of God (Qur'ān, 38.25). De Vaux quotes both al-Hujwīrī and Rūmī as attaching great mystical importance to the personality of David. Qur'ān, 2.250, 252; 27.15. De Vaux, EI¹, Vol. I.2, art. Dāwūd.
2. This Hadīth is sometime attributed to the Prophet and other times to Imām 'Alī. Farūz Anfar, Ahādīth-i Mathnawī, p. 29.

Chapter XCIII

1. We read فلا يتصور عنه عبارة - no expression can explain it at all - instead of فلا يتصور عنه عبارة

no expression can be explained at all about it.

2. Sahl b. 'Abdallāh al-Tustarī (d.282 or 283) is one of the mystics of the third century. He is described by al-Qushayrī as a highly distinguished Ṣūfī who had the power to perform miracles. Al-Sulamī called him a very skillful Ṣūfī doctor highly versed in Ṣūfī sciences. He was a contemporary of Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d.245). He is quoted by Sulamī as saying, "three things are necessary to a Ṣūfī: keeping his affairs secret, performing his religious duties in time, and preserving his state of poverty". Al-Qushayrī, al-Risālah, p. 14. cf. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyyah, ed. Johannes Pedersen (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1960), pp. 199-205; Massignon, EI¹, art. Sahl al-Tustarī.

Chapter XCIX

1. We read فحينئذ تطلع شمستك و..كسد غدك أمستك - then your sun would rise and your past would be jealous of your future - instead of فحينئذ تطلع شمستك و..كسد غدك أمستك - then your sun would rise and your future would be jealous of your past.

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